Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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JULIAN TUDOR HART

the national health service in england and wales

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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CONTENTS

	Editorial Comments	321
Julian Tudor Hart	The National Health Service in England and Wales—A Marxist Evaluation (Part I)	327
Jeremy Hawthorn	Why Does Art Outlive its Origins (Part 2)	332
Ron Bellamy	Opposing Trends Within Imperialism—Unity v. Contradiction	338
	Documents:	
Erich Honecker	From the Report to the 8th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party	344
Ben Turok	Political Power in Africa	349
	Discussion Contribution:	
Alan Rogers	Robert Owen and British Socialism	351

A FEW OF THE ARTICLES DUE IN DECEMBER AND FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Roger Bartra	The Asiatic Mode of Production
Joan Bellamy	Fifty Years of Outer Mongolia
Geoff Bowles	The Affluent and the Permissive Society
Santiago Carrillo	The Spanish Communist Party in the Struggle for Freedom
Reuben Falber	The 32nd Congress of the CPGB
James Harvey	The Thought of Antonio Gramsci
Mick Jenkins	Early Days in the YCL
Heinz Jung	The Concept of the Working Class
Norman Le Broq	George Julian Harney in Jersey
Phil Leeson	The European Common Market (Part 2)
John Lewis	The Thought of Louis Althusser
Grahame Lock	Althusser and Leninism
Bill Pomeroy	The Philippines—Neo-Colonialism at a Crossroad
David Pavett	A Marxist Discourse on Method
Martin Smith	Trends in British Psychiatry

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Editorial Comments

J. D. BERNAL—May 10, 1901-September 25, 1971

The death of J. D. Bernal represents a tremendous and irreparable loss to science and to the world struggle for peace and socialism. There have been few men in this century of comparable intellectual stature.

Bernal combined an encyclopedic knowledge, a masterful understanding of Marxism, and a deep love of humanity. For him, Marxism was no arid dogma, but an outlook and guide to action needing continual creative development.

> "For my part I can only understand the world as I have learned and experienced it, that is, largely in the light of Marxism, and my picture of its further development must lie along the same lines. But I know also that this is only a short-period view and that in time deeper and more comprehensive interpretations will come."

The range of Bernal's contributions to human advance and knowledge is so vast that it would require volumes to detail. His achievements in any one of a number of fields would assure him a place in history—science, philosophy, the history of science, the struggle for peace. One can only marvel that so much could be concentrated in one man.

His scientific achievements have been and will be recorded elsewhere, as will his years of tireless and devoted work for peace. Here we select just a few from several hundred avowedly Marxist writings on Science, Society and how to transform it.

Published in 1939, *The Social Function of Science* is now universally recognised as the pioneer work in the field. Its sub-title was "What science is—what science could do." This was to be a recurrent theme throughout Bernal's writings. A reviewer wrote:

> "No other book of this range and vision is going to appear for many years. It is the testament of one of the few minds of genius of our time . . . It is a unique book and contains an accumulation of knowledge and a passion for ideas that are not likely to be combined in one man for a long time to come!"

Today, when the effect of science on our lives, for good or for evil, is a commonplace, it is difficult fully to appreciate the visionary nature of the book or the impact it had. He initiated a movement of thought and action among scientists. If today there are scientists in every continent conscious of the role of science in society and of their social responsibility, this is due to Bernal more than any other man.

In *Science in History*, Bernal deepened and extended his analysis of the interacting relationship of science and social development. This again was a pioneer work, covering from pre-historic times to the present day. Whether he was dealing with the wide historical sweep of *Science in History* or the more detailed study of a particular scientific or technological development as in *Science and Industry in the Nineteenth Century*, his power to reveal the essential interconnections and their consequences was unequalled.

Bernal never spared himself. He worked hard and long. One sensed that he knew that he had much to give and not long enough to give it. He was no "armchair" contributor to the struggle. He wrote, discussed, spoke, organised, marched, demonstrated. He was not satisfied merely to interpret the world—he helped to change it. Without him we shall have to work harder than ever.

THE TUC AND LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCES

This year's conferences of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress resulted in decisions which could mean that when the party next faces the electorate it will have a more socialist programme than ever before.

The influence of the Left-ward movement within the trade unions is beginning to be

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felt strongly in decisions at the party conference. These called for extensive nationalisation, to include banking and insurance, with a say for workers in running industry.

At the TUC, the delegates pressed for campaigns to rouse public opinion on the issues they saw as most important before the British people—unemployment, low pensions, Tory attacks on the social services and the freedom for workers to withdraw their labour.

Both conferences condemned the terms negotiated by the Government for entering the Common Market, and there was a clearly and frequently-indicated growing opposition to the market as such. Mr. Harold Wilson is unlikely to be in a position to tolerate a Right-wing pro-market revolt within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The price of maintaining the highest degree of anti-Tory unity in the party is increasingly having to be a more Left-looking platform.

TRADE UNION VIEWS

If the party is to be seen as a united alternative to the Tories it will, the conferences showed, have increasingly to take into account the views of the organised working class, as expressed by the unions. This fact points to the correctness of Communist Party strategy in fighting within the trade union movement for socialist alternative policies to those of the Tories. It shows the shallowness of the super-Left militants who dismiss the unions as "bureacracies" increasingly incorporated into the imperialist State machine.

Joint working parties of Labour Party leaders and the TUC General Council on all major policy questions were agreed by the party conference. Within these will be hammered out Labour's policies for the next General Election.

The party adopted anti-cold war resolutions on East-West relations, and lined up with the democratic forces fighting for liberation in Southern Africa and in Bangla Desh.

But, as always, only the extent to which the labour movement is able to mobilise people to campaign publicly for the progressive policies will they be incorporated into Labour's election manifesto. Certainly, if workers sit back then they will find little reflecting the conference decisions when the text of it comes out.

This is emphasised by the fact that there was only one new addition to each of the Left-wing minorities on the TUC General Council (miners' leader Lawrence Daly) and on the party executive (engineering union technician John Forrester).

The Parliamentary Labour Party remains as it was previously—and will do so until the unions exercise their powers to influence the selection of candidates. But it will find it increasingly difficult to ignore the views of the unions who sponsor so many of them and pay the running costs of the party.

SHOSTAKOVITCH—65

Dmitri Shostakovitch was 65 years of age last month. His creative life spans the 50 years existence of the Soviet Union, where he continues as the creator of works that excite the mind to think, and which drive the pulse: they seem to brace man to face both the challenge and the tragedy of his times.

Brilliance, originality, technical accomplishment were immediately evident in his First Symphony (his Opus No. 10, it is worth noting) which he wrote when he was 19 years of age.

His versatility has produced operas, ballets, concertos, oratorios, chamber music, film music, and popular songs, but he is most of all significant as a symphonist. Typical of his modesty was his remark on his Tenth Symphony, a work of towering greatness, "I wrote it very quickly . . . and there is much that cannot be done well when one works so fast."

One might well ask what else it is, apart from immense musical talent, that has enabled this physically frail and modest man to survive world-wide controversy and, at times, the sharp criticism and doubts of some of his contemporaries at home.

Undoubtedly, his spiritual strength, his power to endure and to develop creatively, arises from Shostakovitch's concern for man's fate, in his non-metaphysical approach to the human condition. And with war, ruthlessness and injustice rife in the world, can it be surprising that a great modern symphonist, who places man at the core of his work, should have resort to musical tragedy?

The contemporaneous nature of Shostakovitch's creativity is as inevitable as his musical individuality. This is reaffirmed in his Thirteenth Symphony, which utilises Yevtushenko's poem of wrath against anti-semitism, "Babi Yar", in its cantata-like score. The mocking irony of the movement "Careers" in the Thirteenth Symphony re-

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veals the composer to be the kind of great and distinguished man who has not got his head stuck up in the clouds.

T. E. NICHOLAS

There are signs of growing interest in past historical events in Wales and the struggle of its workers and peasants. Last year came the publication of *CYFFRO* (Change) the twice-yearly journal of the Communist Party, but already early in 1970 there was formed the "Welsh Labour History Association", or in Welsh "Cymdeithas Hanes Gweithwyr Cymru", with its journal "Welsh Labour History" edited by Dr. Goronwy Hughes, M.A., D.Phil., C.Sc., Talwra Glas, Afenwen, Caerwys, Flintshire, North Wales.

Recently it has published four supplementary bulletins. Two of them are reproductions of articles by T. E. Nicholas, the revolutionary Welsh poet and foundation member of the Communist Party, who died on April 19 at the age of 91 years, and for whom there was a public memorial meeting in Bangor during the National Eisteddfod in the first week of August.

Both of them were written by T. E. Nicholas as long ago as 1912. The first is a brief description of the life of Robert Jones Derfel, born in the little village of Llandderfel in North Wales in July 1824 who died in Manchester in December 1905 at the age of 81 years. Derfel left Wales when 21 years old, first went to Liverpool, and then to Manchester, where he settled down until he died.

Derfel was closely associated with Ernest Jones, the Chartist leader, both of them members of the executive council of the Manchester branch of the Reform League. However, Derfel moved far more rapidly towards socialist ideas, gave up his Christian religion, became a rationalist, and a member of the Social Democratic Federation along with William Morris, Eleanor Marx and others before it split up in 1884.

Derfel preserved his knowledge of Welsh and wrote to several journals (mainly poems) in that language. They were simple and direct, couched in the language of the people. This brief extract gives a glimpse of his political outlook:

> "There are some who will suffer when Socialism is realised, but they will not be the workers. Those who will suffer will be the idle rich, who fatten and become millionaires through the suffering of millions of men and women. To them Socialism has no gospel of comfort. But to the workers of the world it means emancipation, leisure, honour, and happiness all round".

Derfel wrote these words 80 years ago, when T. E. Nicholas was only 11 years old. T. E. Nicholas in later years was greatly influenced by these writings and poems. He followed closely in Derfel's footsteps, and at the age of 30 was an active socialist, in close touch with Keir Hardie. In April 1912 the Welsh journal "Y Geninen" (The Leek) published a long article by him in support of the miners' minimum wage strike, which argued that higher wages alone would not achieve working class emancipation unless allied with political action to change the socialist system.

Idris Cox (who sent in this brief review) explained that he couldn't refrain from making a rough translation of the latter part of this article:

> "I'm looking forward to a better day, and working for it; a day of peace between the nations of the world; a day when the land is given back to the people; a day when the workers get the full fruits of their labour; a day when soldiers are given more useful work; and a day when monarchs and parasites are no more".

REBECCA AND HER CHILDREN

Another supplement is *Hanes Becca a'i Phlant* (History of Becca and her children). This is a reproduction of 12 instalments in *Tarian Y Gweithiwr* (The Worker's Shield) between August and November 1886. They were written by an ordinary worker who participated as a boy in the historic marches of the time in West Wales for the destruction of the turn-pike gates.

This is a part of the history (though to some extent legendary) of a great movement between 1840 and 1843, which not only kept the police busy, but even prompted the government to send soldiers down from London. For those who read Welsh it's a most exciting and thrilling episode of Welsh history.

The fourth supplement is a collection of poems (in English and in Welsh) of the movement *Cymru Fydd* (Wales to Be). *Cymru Fydd* was a freedom movement which grew in Wales during the last quarter of the 19th century, and its spirit still remains in the existing *Urdd Gobaith Cymru*, the "League of Hope for Wales" which inspires thousands of children and young people.

POLITICAL SONGS

Frank Jackson writes: "In a previous

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issue of "Marxism Today" you ask for texts of political songs, I append one to which we used to give voice to with great gusto in 1916-17. I forget the other stanzas, but the one that the "Poem on Poverty" reminded me of was as follows:

> Lloyd George they say
> Will die one day
> And ride in a flaming chariot.
> To ride in state on a red hot plate,
> To sit by the side of Judas Iscariot.
> On that day the Devil will say,
> "Now you must move up higher
> Away from the fire
> "And make room for that 'Bugger' from Wales."

"I well remember that, going home from a BSP meeting on top of an LCC tram, after calling at a favourite pub when a party of us sung this with all the power of our voices to the disgust of some Liberals who stopped the tram to demand us off, and much to their disgust found the majority—a full tram—supporting us and taking it up with great gusto whilst "The Call" and pamphlets readily changed hands. The conductor was with us and hiked out the "Libs", and we drove happily homeward".

A REPEAT OF HISTORY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Immediately after obtaining independence in 1946, the Philippines became a scene of popular guerrilla armed struggle, provoked by brutal suppression of resistance to American imperialist plans to continue a neo-colonial control of that country. It took a succession of American-backed governments to put down the Huk liberation movement with a combination of military suppression and slickly-presented but false "reforms". In the meantime, the neo-colonial looting of the Philippines has gone on unchecked and on a mounting scale, by dominant American corporations and by the 400 collaborating Filipino families that control 90 per cent of the country's wealth.

One of the measures used for many years against the liberation movement was a suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*. This enabled the arbitrary arrest and detention of thousands of people without bail, much in the manner of internment in Northern Ireland. Many Filipino Huk and Communist leaders were confined for 20 years as a consequence of this policy.

On August 21 the present Philippine government of President Ferdinand Marcos once again suspended the writ of *habeas corpus* and has been busily arresting and detaining Filipinos. This repetition of history is parallelled by other historical "repeats"; the resurgence within a few years of the suppression of the Huk movement of a new, broader and more powerful movement against imperialism and the corrupt neo-colonialism it has implanted, and the propaganda once again of "reforms" to fool an aroused people.

The development toward a second revolutionary situation since independence has, however, some new features. Filipino ruling groups are bitterly divided in a fight for control of the lucrative posts of political power and increasingly use violence against each other. The bloody bombing incident used as an excuse for Marcos to assume emergency police powers, although blamed on the left and employed against progressive organisations, was actually a part of this ruling class political warfare. Any vestiges of democracy are being cast aside by dominant groups vying for power, a process that further disillusions the people about the nature of their independence.

Another new, and negative feature has been the introduction, from petty-bourgeois sources, of an adventuristic revolutionism into a sector of the people's struggle. Professing to follow "Mao Tse-tung Thought", this small group and its activities gave President Marcos his excuse for adopting emergency police powers. The Huk liberation movement in the past was fully united under the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas. It is obvious that American imperialism and its local allies are counting on the Maoist development to disrupt unity of the Filipino left as crisis conditions mount in the Philippines.

CONTINUED TERROR IN IRAQ

News has recently been received from the Central Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party indicating the continued appalling situation that exists there. It appears that a few months ago the Iraqi authorities in Kirkuk (in the Kurdistan region, north of Iraq) arrested a number of militants, including a member of the Central Committee of the Party who was a well known leader of the Kurdish movement named Shaik Ali El-Barzanchi, together with Comrades Hussain Nadir and Ahmed Shaaban of the regional committee of Kurdistan, Abdull Saleh from Basrah City, a prominent Communist Party cadre kidnapped in Baghdad, Jewad Attia of

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the local committee of City Kut and Mohammed Hassan Dujaili, a Party cadre who was kidnapped in Nillah City.

After being ill-treated by the police all these comrades were taken to Baghdad and kept in Nihaya Palace which is used by the police as a torture chamber.

The Party made efforts to find out the fate of the comrades and approached the leaders of the Baath Party and the Government again and again. The Government and the Baath leaders stated that the detainees were under their protection and would be released.

More recent information indicates that despite the pledge of the Baath leaders the comrades were killed by torture.

The Appeal from the Iraqi Party states: "It is obvious that the Iraqi regime is continuing its policy of terror and suppression against the democratic forces, and specially against the Iraqi Communists...

"From the very beginning, the Iraqi Communist Party has warned of the consequences of a policy of suppression directed against the national and democratic forces, and has called upon the Baath Party to solve the urgent problems facing the country, notably the problem of democracy, as well as to terminate the policy of terror against the people, but the Baath Party in fact has rejected all the initiatives of our Party and other forces.

"It seems that the blood of revolutionaries which was shed in Iraq in 1963 by the hands of the same people has not quenched their thirst. The situation in the country is deteriorating, therefore we call for greater efforts in the campaign of solidarity with the Iraqi people.

"In thanking all those who expressed their opinion with regard to the suppression and terror in Iraq, once again comrades, friends, brothers, we call upon all progressive people and all fraternal Communist parties and democratic forces to send protests to the Iraqi President, to expose, by all methods, these events which are a part of the reactionary wave which was launched against the progressive-democratic forces in the Middle East, and which serves imperialism and Zionism".

GRAMSCI'S PRISON NOTEBOOKS

The publication last month by Lawrence and Wishart of a large part of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks** was something of a landmark in Marxist publishing in Britain. It is a magnificent book (and its high price corresponds at once to its size, a total of nearly six hundred pages, and to the rising costs of book production in this country). These writings of Antonio Gramsci are among the most creative contributions to Marxism ever penned. Written back in the late twenties and early thirties, their full creative force is only today becoming manifest to all. They are truly contemporary Marxism.

This is a volume of "selections" from the Notebooks, but all the items included are published in full. The book is organised into three parts—I. Problems of History and Culture, II. Notes on Politics, III. The Philosophy of Praxis. The first part contains Gramsci's writings on "The Intellectuals" and "The Organisation of Education and Culture", with his "Notes on Italian History". The second begins with a new translation of "The Modern Prince", the famous treatise on the role of a Marxist political party, followed by "State and Civil Society" and "Americanism and Fordism". The third part contains "Problems of Philosophy and History" and "Some Problems in the Study of the Philosophy of Praxis". The phrase "philosophy of praxis" was used by Gramsci partly to fox the prison authorities and partly to bring out the essential nature of Marxist philosophy.

This English edition of Gramsci has been the fruits of co-operation between Communists and the New Left in this country. The translation has been done by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, who have contributed a long Introduction and a wealth of explanatory notes. The Introduction, of nearly a hundred pages, contains a strikingly lucid assessment of Gramsci's life and work, including his role in the foundation of the Italian Communist Party and as its representative for some years on the Comintern. The notes will be invaluable to English readers for their explanations of both references to Italian history and personalities, and of the meanings of special terms and phrases employed by Gramsci.

This volume will become basic reading for Marxists and all interested in the development of Marxism. It is an essential part, lacking until now, of our political equipment for today's struggles. The publishers, editors and translators hope soon to begin work on the preparation of two more volumes of Gramsci—one of his political writings prior to his imprisonment together with further items from the Prison Notebooks, the other

* Antonio Gramsci: *Selection from the Prison Notebook*. Lawrence & Wishart. 579pp., £6.

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of his writings on cultural topics.

"NO HONOUR IN POLITICS"

Lawrence and Wishart have just published the third of the series of four books D. N. Pritt is writing about "Law, Class and Society".* The second, on *The Apparatus of the Law,* was commented on in these notes in a recent issue. This third book falls into two distinct parts, *Law and Politics* and *Law in the Colonies.* These are two themes on which Pritt's vast experience makes him peculiarly competent to write.

Dealing with Law and Politics, Pritt tackles "the role of law and lawyers in the class struggle". First he shows how in the law are embodied measures designed to protect the existing capitalist order and to harry and punish its critics and opponents. Then, with a wealth of illustration, he discusses the conduct of political prosecutions in England and the problems of the defence. This all blows sky high the legal myth that no-one in England is proceeded against or punished on account of his politics.

In the second part, on Law in the Colonies, Pritt begins with a brilliant exposition of the nature of colonialism and of colonial government. Then he goes on to deal with how "law" has been applied in British Colonies—thanks to the struggle against colonialism, not many still survive for these legal atrocities to be perpetrated in. The maxim from Benjamin Disraeli which Pritt cites on his title page is peculiarly apposite here—"In Politics there is no honour". Disraeli certainly knew what he was talking about!

The final book of this series will be published next year. The four books together will constitute a magnificent and unique treatise on English Law "as seen through the eyes of a Marxist".

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MILITANT TRADE UNIONISM

A most valuable bibliography of the books, pamphlets, periodicals and rank and file papers issued by the Red International of Labour Unions and the British National Minority Movement is now available.[1]

This is a collective effort, the joint work of Edmund Frow, Frank Jackson, John Mahon and William Zak, all of whom participated actively in the work of the RILU and the National Minority Movement in the "20's" and early "30's" when these bodies were the focus of Left-Wing struggle in the Unions and against the employers' offensive.

The bibliography, the titles of the books, pamphlets and journals listed, the names especially of some of the authors—Tom Mann, Harry Pollitt, Willie Gallacher, Arthur Horner and many others—all bring the great struggles of those stirring days back to life again. This Bibliography will be of enormous assistance to all desiring to explore the trade union history of the period 1920-36.

MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY CATALOGUE

The Marx Memorial Library is in process of preparing catalogues of their important collection of books, pamphlets and documents.

The first two sections are now available. Part One covers the "Marxist Classics" and Part Two "Social and Political Theory".[2]

These are two very useful documents not only for ascertaining what is available for consultation at the Marx Library, but for preparing reading lists and bibliographical material.

BACK ISSUES WANTED

We are in need of the following back copies of Marxism Today:—

1957, 1958, 1959:	All issues.
1961:	June and October.
1963:	April and August.
1964:	January.

If any reader has any of these we would greatly appreciate them.

Please do not send other issues as we have plenty and postage is so heavy.

* *Law and Politics, and Law in the Colonies,* by D. N. Pritt. Lawrence & Wishart, 151 pp., £2.

[1] A List of the publications in Britain of the Red International of Labour Unions and of the National Minority Movement, available from "Marxism Today", 16 King Street, London, W.C.2. Price 28p including postage.

[2] *Marx Memorial Library Catalogue*—Part One and Part Two available at 15p each, from the Librarian, Marx Memorial Library, Marx House, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.1.

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The National Health Service in England and Wales*—A Marxist Evaluation (Part 1)

Julian Tudor Hart, MB, DCH, MRCGP

Achievements and Limitations

We live in a time of spectacular advance in the health of the people. It is reliably calculated that in 1968 there were more than 22 million people living in England and Wales, who would have died had the rate of decline in childhood mortality from 1901 to 1935 persisted unchanged.[1] Mortality in childhood began to fall slowly in the 1850's, rapidly in the 1920's, then slowly again from 1925 to 1935. The introduction then of the first antibiotic, sulphanilamide, coincided with the start of a dramatic and accelerating decline that reduced annual childhood mortality (age 1-14; ages below one year excluded) from about 3,000 per million in 1935 to about 550 per million in 1955. In 1935 pneumonia, tuberculosis, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, childbed fever, septicaemia, mastoiditis, brain abscess, osteomyelitis, syphilis, meningitis, and bronchiectasis (all infections of one sort or another) were all common, or at least not rare, causes of death in childhood or early adult life. By 1955 all were unusual or rare causes of death, and many had almost disappeared. The decline in mortality in middle age was substantial but less dramatic, and expectation of life in the aged showed little change. In the period 1838-54 a man who reached 60 lived an average of 13.5 more years; by 1960-62 this had increased only to 15.1 years.[2] So we may fairly say that during the lifetime of older readers, survival to retirement has become normal, death before this unusual though not rare, death under 40 rare, and death in childhood exceptional, at least after the first four months of life.

However, that parents no longer expect some of their children to die, and that death in youth is no longer common, is irrelevant to the situation of bereaved parents, to the widows of the many men who drop dead in early middle age from coronary heart disease, or to the private devastation that follows the deaths of youngish women with breast cancer; there are certainly more unsolved medical problems than solved ones, and the rate of effective solution is now declining compared with that great 20 years after 1935. Deaths from road and industrial accidents, from leukaemia and the cancers of childhood, from coronary heart disease in men of early middle age, from lung cancer in later middle age, are all stagnant or increasing. Deaths from all these causes are much less common than those from infections before 1935, but quite common enough for nearly all of us to have lost a close friend or relative from one of them, long before old age. The objective of health services should be to make similar advances on these fronts in the period 1971 to 1990; virtually to ensure survival to old age, where death can normally be accepted as a necessary and inevitable end. At the rate we are going now, this will not be done.

Three Variables

Changes in mortality depend on three separate though interdependent variables. First, social and environmental changes: housing, wages, nutrition, education, working conditions, and the customary forms of social behaviour that make up a culture (including smoking, drinking, sport, what you go to the doctor with and what you don't). Together with a safe water supply, changes in this group account for most of the improvement in mortality before 1935; medical services eased pain and distress, saved some lives with emergency surgery, and rather fewer with the slender real resources of physicians, but the contribution of medical care to declining mortality was very much smaller than that from improved housing, nutrition, sanitation and education. Doctors have always mitigated the horrors of life; but they only saved life on a substantial scale after the antibiotic era began in 1935.

* This paper excludes Scottish material which is not available from the same sources. Mortality rates in Scotland are generally the highest in Britain.

[1] Office of Health Economics report "Reductions in Childhood Mortality", Update, 1971, 3, 997.

[2] J. N. Morris, "Uses of Epidemiology", E. & S. Livingstone, London, 1964.

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The second factor is the level attained by medical science. The prevention and treatment of the persisting causes of premature death are mostly far more complex than was the case with infections. The only one whose prevention is already possible is so far not at all prevented; lung cancer deaths would shrink to two per cent of their present level if all cigarette smoking ceased. It is likely that as the complex causes of the cancers and of coronary heart disease are unravelled, their prevention will also depend on similar but perhaps more extensive changes in human behaviour, rather than on new drugs and operations. This is quite clearly the case with accidents. Medical discovery will continue to accelerate, though distorted by the commercial interests of the pharmaceutical industry, and perhaps blunted by the cynicism of many medical scientists as to the eventual effectiveness and value of their work. Capitalism no longer believes in itself, and this has had important repercussions in scientific and professional thought insofar as there is not yet a belief in any alternative.

The third factor is the extent to which scientific possibility is translated into social fact—the delivery of medical care. In medicine as in every other sphere, the gap between what is technically feasible and what is actually done for the mass of mankind is growing wider, and can be narrowed only by big changes in the organisation of society in general, and of health services in particular. Changes of this nature are much more urgent than the further acceleration of research, important though this is.

The Social Distribution of Sickness and Death

Mortality in relation to age is known to be unevenly distributed in Britain, socially and geographically, and this may be assumed to reflect differences in sickness and disability. These social and geographical differences have been affected much less by the NHS than is usually thought. Mortality from all causes (standardised for age and sex differences between populations) in the mining valleys of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire rose in comparison with England and Wales rates from a 28 per cent excess in 1934-39, to a 31 per cent excess in 1964-68. The excess of infant mortality (deaths under one year of age per 1,000 live births) rose from 15 per cent higher than England and Wales rates in 1921-25, to 24 per cent higher in 1966-68. Standardised mortality rates from all causes for South Wales coal miners rose from an excess of 15 per cent higher than England and Wales rates for all occupations in 1931, to a 58 per cent excess in 1951. Excess mortality among all miners in England and Wales rose from six per cent in 1931 to 12 per cent in 1951, that of their wives persisted at 28 per cent in both years, and that of their infants rose from 34 per cent to 50 per cent.[3]

The Registrar General divides the population into five social classes according to husband's occupation: the mortality of social classes I plus II (professional, managerial, and higher supervisory) was 18 per cent less than the rate for all classes in 1951 (the last year available), whereas that for social classes IV plus V (semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers) was five per cent above it. For the same groups and in the same year, infant mortality was 37 per cent below and 38 per cent above national average rates respectively.[4] Of course in every case actual rates have fallen dramatically; it is the differences between social groups that have stagnated or grown between the 1920's and the 1960's.

In the 1950's virtually only the Communist Party questioned the assumption that the taxation policies and social services of the 1945 Labour government had had a large socially redistributive effect; that the share of money, housing, education and health care going to manual workers and their families had greatly increased, at the expense of the rich and the middle class. Careful study of all objective indices in each of these categories has refuted this assumption in every case,[5] and the recognition of this has played a large part in the new wave of Left opinion in the schools and universities. Professor R. M. Titmuss ruefully concluded,

> "We know from 15 years experience of the Health Service that the higher income groups know how to make better use of the service; they tend to receive more specialist attention; occupy more of the beds in better equipped and staffed hospitals; received more elective surgery (*as opposed to emergency surgery:* JTH); have better maternal care, and are more likely to get psychiatric help and psychotherapy than low-income groups—particularly the unskilled".[6]

This is not to say that the NHS did not improve access to medical care for the working class: only that there were even greater improvements for the middle class and the rich, so that there was no *net* redistributive effect. In truth, the NHS has been an immense advance over the services previously

[3] J. T. Hart, "The Health of Coalmining Communities", Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners, 1971, **21**, 517.

[4] Registrar General's Decennial Reports of Occupational Mortality, 1931 (published 1938), and 1951 (published 1958), HMSO.

[5] H. Frankel, "Capitalist Society and Modern Sociology", Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1970. **4**.

[6] R. M. Titmus, "Commitment to Welfare", Unwin, London, 1968.

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available to industrial workers and their families, has opened up exciting new possibilities of new forms and styles of medical care (as yet largely unrealised), and does in some ways represent an actual and living piece of Socialism, a fragment of the new society we shall build. That is why its truly socialist features are still opposed on principle, not only to save money.

Yet it is equally true that it is also grossly undemocratic in its planning and administration, feudal in its staffing structure and wage policies (just compare these aspects with their equivalents in education!), and that it has never accepted—or indeed been offered—any planned strategy for reducing the social differences I have listed. No judgement is possible without taking account of these very complex and contradictory trends, in particular situations at specified times: from our point of view the most relevant situation is that of the largest disadvantaged social group, the populations of areas of decayed housing, obsolescent industry, and persistent unemployment. To understand that situation, we must trace the origins of prepaid primary care in these areas.

The Club System

This begins towards the end of the 19th Century in coalmining areas, where private practice was never workable, and the Club system evolved with a substantial element of local workers' initiative and to some extent of control, both of general practitioners and of cottage hospitals (elements entirely lost after 1948). The Club system guaranteed minimum care and treatment for working men and sometimes for their families, paid for by a levy on wages at source, plus an employers' contribution. Confining cover to employed working men earning less than a minimum wage judged to exclude supervisory and lower managerial staffs, and eliminating elements of local control, the Lloyd George Insurance Act of 1911 extended prepaid care to the whole country. The doctor's time was still the main item of cost; medicines were cheap as well as being largely ineffective, equipment was simple, laboratories and X-ray departments were only beginning to exist.

The doctors' incomes were based on a rapid turnover with a small profit on each item of service for the panel, fees for home confinements and acute illnesses in children, and what the market would stand in private fees from local shopkeepers, professionals, businessmen and gentry; it was the proportion in which these variously profitable classes were to be found that determined the income of the practice, and, as a rule, the extent to which the doctor could give time to each item of his work—time being the main determinant of its quality. Doctors were themselves often employed and usually exploited by colleagues who owned the buildings, equipment, and "goodwill" of the practice—its capital. The system is well described (a bit romantically) by Cronin in "The Citadel", and the plight of the "sixpenny doctors" who served the slums revealed by Shaw in "The Doctor's Dilemma" should be read by anyone who yearns for a lost and golden age of general practice before the NHS. Specialist advice and care, rarely sought and sparingly obtainable, came from the local County hospital, often serving also as a workhouse, and a home for the indigent and dying. For a few cases specialist advice came from a teaching hospital (unless there was one close by), or by private referrals to Harley Street or its local equivalent. Wide areas of the country had no proper specialist advice readily available, even by the standards of the time.

Apart from emergency surgery, the content of medical care before 1930 was overwhelmingly palliative—the relief of symptoms without significant effect on outcome. Then medical science began to yield really practical results; but the general practitioner-entrepreneur system of primary care assimilated them slowly and erratically. From the early 1930's diphtheria was as completely preventable as it is now, by infant innoculation; but no campaign of mass immunisation was begun until the war years, and in 1941 there were 50,000 cases in England and Wales, and 2,400 of them died. The organisation of society for war accelerated overdue changes in medical care. The County hospitals were for the first time co-ordinated through the Emergency Medical Service (to cope with expected war casualties), a beginning for a nationally planned hospital service.

It was plain that what the Left had claimed before the war was true; society could be planned for the attainment of agreed social objectives, and such planning could over-ride the so-called iron laws of the market, which had in fact placed profit for employers as the "natural" first priority from which all else must come. The anti-fascist character of the war, and the political effects of the alliance with the Soviet Union, resulted in the isolation of right wing opinion from 1942 onward, while plans for post-war social services were being devised. Plans for a national health service, with primary care delivered from health centres by doctors who would no longer be self-employed entrepreneurs, were widely approved even by the British Medical Association, always a rallying point for reaction; among doctors in the forces, a large majority voted in favour of post-war health centre practice in a referendum.

The NHS

By the time the NHS was ready for launching there was a very different situation. The reversal of

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alliances, begun behind the scenes by Churchill in 1944, was carried through as fast as the public would tolerate, by the Labour government. By 1948 Britain was well into the cold war, with plans for social reconstruction scaled down to accommodate the development of nuclear weapons, a huge standing army, and the pursuit of colonial wars. Health centres were quietly dropped without debate, by administrative circular a few months before the service began; for general practitioners the only prospect appeared to many to be a huge expansion of panel practice, without new resources to deal with it. It was not difficult for the BMA to create an atmosphere of hysterical opposition to the service among GPs; but they were no longer the decisive force in the profession. The really critical factor was the attitude of the senior hospital specialists, the consultants.

Despite their mostly very reactionary opinions, they knew that the County hospitals could only be brought to a modern technical standard by huge sums of money that could come only from central taxation, and that the Voluntary and Teaching hospitals were near bankruptcy and were bound to depend on the same source. Scientific medical care depended upon heavy spending on equipment, buildings, and supporting technical staff, so that the cost of the doctors themselves was becoming a small proportion of total costs; high salaries were more attractive than fees in these circumstances, especially so since rights to private practice were safeguarded, and a dominant position was given to consultants in the running of the hospitals without effective representation of local opinion in the event of conflicts of interest—the bypassing of waiting lists by fee-paying patients, for instance. Aneurin Bevan is said to have admitted that he "choked their mouths with gold". The service went ahead with the reluctant agreement of the consultants, and after the usual loud noises the GPs accepted their lot.

The greatest achievement of the NHS was the provision of proper specialist care and properly equipped X-ray departments and laboratories in the former Poor Law hospitals—a real measure of social redistribution of medical care, since these hospitals tended to serve industrial communities. The general practitioner-surgeon was pushed out of hospital, often rudely and with real loss to some patients as well as the morale of general practice, but with immense gains in new standards of professionalism, particularly in surgery and anaesthetics. A huge backlog of gynaecological surgery was shifted in the 1950's, the accumulated discomfort and misery of the neglected pre-war generations of working class mothers. A careful study of 734 randomly sampled families in 1961 in London and Northampton[7] found that "When thinking of the Health Service mothers are mainly conscious of the extent to which services have become available in recent years. They were more aware of recent changes in health services than of changes in any other service. . . . Doctors came second to relatives and friends in the list of those who had been helpful in times of trouble."

Meanwhile the GPs got no buildings, staff, equipment, or any coherent future perspective for primary care from either Labour or Conservative governments, who may have been well pleased with the BMA's insistence that the GP as an independent contractor should pay whatever he pleased for all these things from his own pocket. In the areas we are discussing this had the natural result that the standard GP's surgery was a converted shop, usually shabbier than any other in the High Street. Real, scientific medical care was to be developed in hospitals, and what could be spared after bombs were paid for was to go to them. Spending on general practice, including its largest and inflated component, prescribed drugs, did not change either in real-money terms or as a proportion of national income between 1949 and 1966. The system of doctors' pay carried over from the 1911 panel "encouraged the doctor to undertake the treatment of more patients than he could deal with efficiently. . . . It is particularly regrettable that the revolutionary conception of a National Health Service, which has transformed the hospitals of the United Kingdom to the great benefit of the community, should not have brought about an equally radical change in general practice. Instead . . . the NHS has preserved and intensified the worst features of general practice. . . ."[8]

The General Practitioner

In a study of 104 general practitioners in 55 English practices outside London six months after the start of the NHS, Collings[9] described the situation in industrial practices inherited from the past.

> "The working environment of general practitioners in industrial areas was so limiting that their individual capacity counted for very little. In the circumstances prevailing, the most essential qualification for the industrial GP . . . is ability as a snap diagnostician—an ability to reach an accurate diagnosis on a minimum of evidence . . . the worst elements of general practice are to be found in those

[7] Family Needs and Social Services: Political & Economic Planning, London, 1961. **8.**

[8] E. F. James, "The General Practitioner and the Hospital", Lancet, 1961, **1,** 1361.

[9] J. S. Collings, "General Practice in England Today", Lancet, 1950, **1,** 555.

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> places where there is the greatest and most urgent demand for good medical service. . . . Some conditions of general practice are bad enough to change a good doctor into a bad doctor in a very short time. These very bad conditions are to be found chiefly in industrial areas".

Since then a lot has happened, but not enough to dispel this shabby inheritance. The new doctors are much better trained. Twenty years too late, but better than never, health centres are going up at a significant rate: 12 opened in 1967, 36 in 1968, 50 in 1969, and in 1969 79 were under construction and 74 approved.[10] Even Ministers of Health can see that efficient hospitals can no longer be built upon demoralised and impoverished primary care. An energetic minority of GPs in the College of Practitioners has achieved a great deal in developing the best of the old traditions of primary care in the new conditions of a comprehensive service free at the time of use, with increasing co-operation among doctors instead of the rival shopkeeping of the recent past. Private practice at primary care level in all industrial areas is stone dead, and in the others has lost its authority and influence with all but a greedy handful of younger doctors.

However, the hard fact remains that all of these good things have happened most where they were least needed. Cartwright and Marshall[11] found that in working class areas 80 per cent of doctors' surgeries were built before 1900, and only five per cent since the war; in middle class areas the proportions were 50 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. Characteristically, twice as many middle class people were critical of doctors' consulting rooms as workers, and three times as many of waiting rooms and of the fullness of explanations to them about their illnesses.

The Workers' G.P.

Cartwright's study of hospital care[12] showed that middle class patients in fact received much more explanation than working class patients, and were more critical of nursing care and of hospital facilities. The same study compared general practitioners in middle and working class areas: more middle class area GPs had less than 2,000 patients, fewer had more than 2,500, nearly twice as many had some specialist qualification in child health or obstetrics, five times as many had been to a London rather than a provincial medical school (less prestigious but probably better, at least in 1971), four times as many had been to Oxford or Cambridge, twice as many had part-time hospital appointments and nearly three times as many sometimes visited their patients in hospital.

Medical students are drawn mainly from upper and middle class families, and hardly at all from the families of unskilled labourers; this is obvious, and so is the general tendency for doctors to identify far more readily with their middle class patients than with unskilled workers which is its natural consequence. Less well known is the fact that this trend is increasing.

The Royal Commission on Medical Education[13] found that 34.5 per cent of medical students in 1961 were drawn from the professional and managerial class (2.8 per cent of the population), compared with 39.6 per cent of the students in 1966; whereas the 27.9 per cent drawn from the families of manual or non-manual skilled workers (49.9 per cent of the population) in 1961, fell to 21.7 per cent in 1966. This happened despite the fact that there was a large and growing supply of qualified school leavers from state schools. Although 70.9 per cent of all school leavers with three or more A-levels come from state schools, only 43.4 per cent of medical students had received state education in both years of the enquiry; there can surely be no other profession, other than service officers, that recruits more than half its members from fee-paying schools.

Figures like these only underline the common experience of working people; working class areas are a last choice for most doctors, whether working in hospitals or in general practice, and there is therefore a permanent tendency for those with the best qualifications to go to those places that need them least, and for unfilled vacancies to occur in areas of greatest sickness and mortality. This tendency I have summed up as the Inverse Care Law: that the availability of good medical care tends to vary inversely with the need for it in the population served.[14] The operation of this is maximal in medical care systems operating on a market distribution of health care as a commodity, and minimal in systems that protect distribution from market forces; but in all systems a rational and humane distribution of medical staff is a problem, resting ultimately on motivation and political and social beliefs.

Like many other problems of industrialised societies, the common ownership of the means of production and the breaking of the monopoly of real power enjoyed by the rich only creates a basis

[10] Department of Health and Social Security, Annual Report for England, 1969.

[11] A. Cartwright and J. Marshall, "General Practice in 1963", Medical Care, 1965, **3**, 69.

[12] Ann Cartwright, "Human Relations and Hospital Care", Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964. 10.

[13] Report of the Royal Commission on Medical Education 1965-68, HMSO, London, 1968.

[14] J. T. Hart, "The Inverse Care Law", Lancet, 1971, **1**, 405.

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for its solution, which will still have to be fought for. The patterns of ambition in medicine have got to change, to coincide more fully with the interests of patients.

Summary

To sum up: the NHS has huge achievements to its credit, which arise from the extent to which it removed the distribution of medical care from the commodity market, and injected public money into a planned development of the hospital service. Both of these features are now under attack. The NHS failed to secure a redistribution of care sufficient to reduce class differences in mortality (though without it these would have been much greater); to this extent it failed fully to apply established medical techniques to the whole population.

The organisation and style of work of the NHS probably also needs great modification to deliver effective care and prevention of the diseases of premature ageing (coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and the cancers) which are the main objects of new research and techniques. This modification is needed chiefly at primary care level, where massive rebuilding, re-equipment, and expansion of supporting paramedical staffs is needed, as well as a further redistribution of medical manpower; such changes have only begun, are proceeding most slowly in the areas of greatest need, and are already being obstructed by the economic crisis of British capitalism.

It is against this background that we must assess current political trends as they affect the NHS: opposition to the principles of the NHS by some reactionary academics, with pressure for at least a partial return to a market distribution of health care, trends to bureaucratisation, depersonalisation, and of interest in disease rather than in the person who suffers it (all recognisable in some of the less successful health centre developments), abdication by many liberal and social-democratic leaders of traditional values and objectives in the face of accelerating economic crisis and political reaction—but also powerful new trends in favour of a rational and humane service that can realise more completely the possibilities of medical science, which if allied to the surviving militant traditions of the Trade Unions and political Left could bring about a bigger, more complete and consistent breakthrough than the "revolution" of 1948.

The second part of this article will examine these trends more fully, and attempt an estimate of the possibilities for the future.

Why Does Art Outlive its Origins? (Part 2)

Jeremy Hawthorn

In the second part of this article I would like to examine those aspects of our response to certain specific works of literature which seem to me to throw particular light on some of the theoretical questions which relate to the lasting aesthetic attraction of great works of art. My argument is that although our response to any work of art is a shifting and complex thing which has to be so because within it our own consciousness and the consciousness of the writer are dialectically related, nevertheless the work of art can describe, reflect or enact aspects of the material world which in a sense are permanently true. They are true not in the sense that it is eternally true that the Norman invasion took place in 1066, but in the sense that our experience of the material world will always confirm certain facts about that world.

In using a term like "our response" it should be understood that this is a fictive abstraction from a continuing process; in one sense it is true that no two people ever have the same "response" to the same work of art, but as social beings we have the power to generalise about our personal experience, which anyway is inevitably composed of components which are socially shared. I would like to start by looking at a sonnet written by John Keats.

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
  Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching with eternal lids apart,
  Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
  Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing at the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
  Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
  Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

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Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

We cannot read this poem without fitting it into the context of our own consciousness, and our consciousness of Keats' consciousness. To move away from this clumsy formulation: as soon as we read the words on the page, we respond to them in ways which our own life and experience have conditioned—we couldn't make any sense of them at all otherwise. But we also reach out to fit the poem as a whole into the context of the poet's life and situation—we cannot understand it otherwise in any real sense. This of course is true of all language—like Marx's spinning-jenny it can only be given meaning in a context. If a man says to us, "I hate communists", our response involves both our own attitude to communists based on our own experience, and also our understanding of the situation which has caused him to adopt that position.

The same statement made by the Chairman of a big-business combine and someone unjustly treated in a socialist country is, in essence, a different thing. This can be demonstrated rather simply if we return to the poem, by referring to some comments on it made by George Thomson in his *Marxism and Poetry*.[1] Professor Thomson discussed the poem under the impression that Keats wrote it on board ship to Italy, shortly before he died. In fact it is now known that the poem was only revised at this time, and had been written some time earlier, in 1819 not 1821. This changed context inevitably affects our response to the poem, not enormously it is true, but in some quite important ways. If we read the poem thinking that Keats was on board ship when he wrote it, the seas lose the inhuman significance they have when regarded from the context of the land, and the star becomes a friendly object to steer by, rather than an inhuman if eternal light in the sky.

The Contrasts

Like many of Keats's poems the sonnet contrasts the transience of human life with the eternity of an inanimate object; the star in this poem has a similar symbolic function to that of the urn in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn". The contrast is made regretfully; Keats is aware that his wish to fuse the eternal qualities of the star and the living presence of his loved one is a vain one; the very nature of his description of the two reveals their irreconcilability. The star's description involves not only immutability, but also isolation and lifelessness, it is significant that the only two human associations it has—the hermit and the priest—both suggest isolation and sterility. Its lone splendour is constantly presented in terms of images involving cold, life-denying situations: the night, the moving waters and the snow. Our response to these images cannot be merely one that is totally defined by the context of the poem—we have to involve our own experience of the things described, just as Keats has to. An image that is purely "literary' is one which makes us refer not to our experiences of life but to our experience of reading other literature, and is consequently weak. As Samuel Johnson puts it:

> An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art: an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature.[2]

Johnson is primarily referring to the poet rather than the reader here, but of course the implication is that the two are linked, that if a writer draws on his reading rather than on his lived experience for the source of his writing's richness, the reader will feel himself in the company of the "literary" rather than of life when he reads. There is no doubt that Keats's fine sensuous perception of what he is writing about in this poem calls the weight of the reader's experience into his response to the poem.

However, "literary" forces do enter into our response to this poem if we are familiar with Keats's work in general. Keats consistently equates warmth and coldness with life and death; the end of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn", where Keats places the urn as a "cold pastoral", and reveals an acceptance of the fact that it is a representation of life, not life itself, is a famous example. This knowledge gives our reading of this poem yet another dimension; we appreciate that Keats is concerned with problems to which he returns time and time again, and the poem thus has part of the cumulative force of his writing as a whole, which is related to our sense of his integrity as a man. This claim has been dismissed as the "Personal Heresy" by C. S. Lewis, who argues that we should concern ourselves with the poem and not the poet, the tale not the teller. Most of us will I feel rather agree with his opponent on this matter, E. M. W. Tillyard, who argues that

> . . . I believe we read Keats in some measure because his poetry gives a version of a remarkable personality of which another version is his life. The two versions are not the same but they are analogous. Part of our response to poetry is in fact similar to the stirring we experience when we meet someone whose personality impresses us.[3]

This aspect of personality, I would claim, obviously cannot be traced to a particular sentiment, traced to a word here or a phrase there; we have a cumulative sense of the mind behind art as we get to know the work of one artist better, and this sense is one that can be had over any distance of time because the

[1] George Thomson, *Marxism and Poetry*, American edition, New York 1946, p. 15.

[2] Samuel Johnson, *Life of Gray*.

[3] E. M. W. Tillyard & C. S. Lewis, *The Personal Heresy*. repr. London 1965, p. 35

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works recreate the context for us in which the personality can emerge. The fact that we can appreciate some literature without knowing who wrote it does not prove that we would not respond to it more fully were we in possession of such information, and anyway, even in the case of anonymous work we have a sense of a writer—even if we are ignorant of his precise identity.

The Incompatibility

It is not just that the star is associated with cold ideas, but that all of the first part of the poem stresses its incompatibility with human life. The star "watches", but with "eternal lids apart", an unpleasant image which has an unpleasant effect on the reader—almost makes one blink. The fact that the star can remain like this reinforces the fact that it is not human. It watches the sea, which is not only associated with the chastity of the priest and the purity implied by "pure ablution", which will contrast with the later insistence on sexual love, but which surrounds earth's "*human* shores". The distinction could not be made more clearly. Not only the sea, but the mountains and the moors too are places antipathetic to human life, and the "mask" of snow again suggests the emotionless—perhaps even recalling the idea of a death-mask.

As Keats looks at the star then, and wishes to share its immortality, he has to describe it in terms which reveal its essential distance from human life; thus when we read the poem we respond to his desire to be immortal, and also to his recognition of the impossibility of it. This is brought home particularly well in the second part of the poem, for just as Keats is unable to describe the star in terms of life, so he is unable to describe his loved one in terms of anything but change. He wants to be "unchangeable", but pillow'd upon his fair love's "*ripening* breast"; as he described her beauty he has to do so in terms of change, not of eternal fixity and stasis. Again, as soon as he tries to unite life and eternity, the very accuracy and honesty of his poetic skill sabotages the effect, and in a final gesture of rejection he again turns, as he does elsewhere, to death. This movement is not a defeatist, suicidal one; it is a statement that to retain those aspects of life and experience which are valuable one must retain change and development, and this implies death. Paradoxically then, his acceptance of death at the end of the poem is a gesture of the acceptance of life and living—which without death is meaningless. As Wallace Stevens puts it in his poem "Sunday Morning", "Death is the mother of beauty."

I have been trying to demonstrate that although our "response" to the poem is a complex, multi-dimensional process, it involves a perception of certain "eternal" truths; it is as true for us today as it was for Keats that to accept life we must accept death, and part of the power the poem has still for us rests on our perception of this truth. But this is not to say that our response is unchanging, or that the poem lasts because it appeals to an unchanging human nature. On the contrary, part of the attraction of the poem is that it allows us to see a very different human nature from our own concerning itself with a subject still relevant for us.

I suggested in the first part of this article that if the social vantage-point of the reader is changed then the totality of his response will also alter. Just as a political demand put forward in one social context would be reactionary, so our conception of *what* the work of art is depends to a certain extent on *where* it is. The difference that a change in the reader's social vantage-point makes to his response to a work of art is usually very subtle, and is complicated by the fact that we are not fixed immobile in a certain consciousness, but can imaginatively project ourselves into a past social situation. But the alteration is still there, however imperceptible it may appear. Reading a poet such as Yeats in the context of the nineteen-thirties must have involved particular problems for the reader with a knowledge of his political leanings. There is no purely "poetic" response to lines like

> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.

The poem is about the world at a particular time, and it appeals to the reader's knowledge and experience of the world. In other words, these lines make a statement which is not just internally referential—they do not just make a statement which has meaning only inside the poem ("The Second Coming"), but one which refers to the same world that writer and reader inhabit. And this being so, some readers will agree with the statement, and some will disagree. If words like "best" and "worst" have a meaning purely internal to the poem, then the latter becomes meaningless, or at best, a sort of sterile linguistic jigsaw-puzzle.

Different Response

But our situation today is different from the situation of the thirties, and our response to the poetry of Yeats, although perhaps containing the same elements of disapproval or disagreement, contains them in a different total context. We read from the vantage-point of our own time, place and consciousness, in a world in which the negative aspects of Yeats's poetry no longer have the same immediate sinister significance that they once had. This being so, I would suggest that we are in a better position now to "suspend" our disapproval of the negative aspects of the poetry, and to concern ourselves with its positive side. Thus we could consider a poem like "The Second Coming" in

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terms of its accurate description of social fragmentation but inaccurate evaluation of it. I know that such a simple distinction inevitably misrepresents—evaluative comments are themselves descriptive. But our modern vantage-point allows us better to set the poem into a context where it is of value to us.

Let me give an extreme analogy. It is quite conceivable that a progressive grouping might today stage an exhibition of fascist progapanda, books, even films. In the context in which these were shown they would fulfill a progressive role, for they would be exposing the reality of fascism rather than propagandising for it. One can see Nazi anti-semitic literature in the Museum of German History in East Berlin. Does this mean that the GDR is countenancing anti-semitism? Of course not, because in the context in which this is shown, it acts as an indictment of fascism, not an argument for it. Now our response to art is more subtle, and changes more imperceptibly than our response to propaganda, which dates very quickly, but the same change in context does affect our response.

To move back to Yeats, I would argue that a poem like "Easter 1916" has a particular relevance for us today which comes from the unique elements in our social situation. Like the Keats sonnet, this poem seems to me to reach out to a perception of certain facts about the world which are in a sense universally true—notably the omnipresence of change, and the dialectical form it takes. In his earlier poetry Yeats tends to see change in a rather clichéd self-regarding melancholic way, as the great thief of experience. His later experience in Ireland leads him to see it both in the wholly negative way of "The Second Coming", but in a far more balanced and sophisticated way in "Easter 1916". In the latter poem he initially stresses the ordinary, unprepossessing nature and appearance of that which is to be transformed in the social upheavals, those he meets

> Coming with vivid faces
> From counter and desk among grey
> Eighteenth-century houses.
> I have passed with a nod of the head
> Or polite meaningless words,
> Or have lingered awhile, and said
> Polite meaningless words,
> And thought before I had done
> Of a mocking tale or a gibe
> To please a companion
> Around the fire at the club,
> Being certain that they and I
> But lived where motley is worn:
> All changed, changed utterly:
> A terrible beauty is born.

His experience of social change leads him into a split reaction—it is both terrible and beautiful, as against the purely hypothetic attitude towards it that he takes in "The Second Coming", where he characterises it totally negatively. At the nodal point of change when quantitative change gives way to qualitative change, Yeats perceives the emergent new: "A terrible beauty is born".

The Principle of Creation

At this moment of perception he moves from his purely personal, aristocratic dislike of the particular social forces involved, and recognises the principle of creation caught in this process, a principle still as true today as when he wrote. This new awareness of the dynamic, the emergent in social life causes him to see the same principle in all life:

> Hearts with one purpose alone
> Through summer and winter seem
> Enchanted to a stone
> To trouble the living stream.
> The horse that comes from the road,
> The rider, the birds that range
> From cloud to tumbling cloud,
> Minute by minute they change;
> A shadow of cloud on the stream
> Changes minute by minute;
> A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
> And a horse plashes within it;
> The long-legged moor-hens dive,
> And hens to moor-hens call;
> Minute by minute they live:
> The stone's in the midst of all.

The sheer beauty of this vision is not as simple as it might seem. It is associated with Yeats's new understanding of the laws of change that affect societies as much as external nature, and it is both our respect for the honesty of his vision and the fundamental truth of his dialectical vision that fuse and form the principal components in the magnificence of the verse. Not only this, but his accurate realisation that there is a paradoxical element in the fact that in order to change society, the revolutionary must himself be inflexible—like a stone—has a significance to us which our increased knowledge of the nature of revolutionary action contributes to. From this realisation he moves to a question which surely has a particular relevance to us today in view of the history of the past few decades:

> Too long a sacrifice
> Can make a stone of the heart.
> O when may it suffice?
> That is Heaven's part, our part
> To murmur name upon name,
> As a mother names her child. . .

The unsatisfactory nature of the passivity of his solution should not obscure the importance of the problem he has raised, and it is a problem that our contemporary experience gives a relevance which it cannot have had when Yeats wrote. The poem lives for us partly because it refers to that which is eternally true, partly because we can perceive its

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place in the context of Yeats's life and time, but also because we live for the poem—it needs the transfusion of our life and experience to live for us. Engels' comments on literature in two letters to Minna Kautsky and Margaret Harkness are well known for their rejection of a mechanical "Tendenzroman" injection of politics into literature; what is of particular significance in them for us today, I would argue, is that in a truly dialectical manner Engels realises that in order to evaluate a work of literature one must see it in a context which includes its readers; a work of literature with different readers is a different thing:

> . . . especially in our conditions the novel appeals mostly to readers of bourgeois circles, that is, not directly related to us, and therefore a socialist-biased novel fully achieves its purpose, in my view, if by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, breaking down conventional illusions about them, it shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world, instils doubt as to the eternal character of the existing order, although the author does not offer any definite solution or does not even line up openly on any particular side . . .[4]

I stated in the first part of this article that I saw the work of art having a relative, or limited autonomy, or as I prefer to express it, an identity. I would like to try to show in practice what I mean by this. I think that it means that the work of art is a context in which its components must be seen, although this does not mean that it is a *fixed* context, or that it is the *only* context. Let me use the analogy of a human being who we admit—or at least the law admits—has an identity.

Two Approaches

If an individual steals something from us, there are two basic ways in which we can see this action—two fictive abstractions from the totality of its meaning which are most socially useful, We can see it, as the law does (with certain qualifications) as a wrong thing *per se*, irrespective of the man's situation, or we can see it in the context of his own identity, and judge it according to that context. Now of course these two contexts are linked; our separation of them is a necessary fiction. I would argue that our relationship with a work of art is similar. We can see an idea, an opinion in a novel both in the context of that novel (which involves some use of our "external" opinions anyway), and also outside the context of that novel, in the context of our normal set of beliefs, or our understanding of the writer's social situation, and so on. In practice when reading a work we zig-zag between all these contexts dialectically. Artistic success often depends upon an ordering of our movement between these different contexts, as I hope to show.

Let us take the novels of Jane Austen as an example. In these works we encounter a fairly consistent set of beliefs which is in important respects antipathetic to our own. The acceptance of the "rightness" of rigid class-divisions, and the value-judgements attendant upon such an acceptance could be cited as a good example here. (On one occasion, in *Sense and Sensibility*, a character is described as "alone" in a house when there are, of course, servants present. We are expected to understand this in terms of a class outlook in which in a certain sense servants do not exist.) Now our attitude towards such values is I believe a highly complex one, and varies, *for artistic reasons*, from novel to novel.

In *Emma*, for example, much emphasis is placed on the heroine's growing self-awareness and rejection of her pride. An example of this is that by the end of the novel Emma realises that her attempt to marry the illegitimate Harriet off to a social superior was a culpable mistake, as any attempt to move out of the hierarchical class-structure of early nineteenth-century England is "wrong". In this instance I feel that we accept that in the context of the novel this is not a wicked or absurd thing to believe; for a person in Emma's time and place almost certainly would have believed such a thing. Our interest focusses more on how she reconciles the beliefs that her birth has given her with her personal experience of life. Because Emma makes a genuine attempt to behave in a way that she thinks is correct—that is, to do what she sees as being both in the interest of the common good and in the personal interests of those individuals involved, including herself, we respect her for the attempt even if we cannot accept her solution. A key here is consistency.

"Mansfield Park"

On the other hand, in her novel *Mansfield Park*, this reconciliation is not convincing—the novel fails to attain the right kind of limited autonomy—precisely because, as David Lodge puts it, the characters who are presented for our approval in the novel, "are, *according to the novel's own system of values*, defective."[5] (his emphasis). The basic situation on which this inconsistency rests can be easily sketched. Fanny Price is the niece of Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram and is brought up by them as a favour to her socially and economically less-favoured parents. Whilst at their seat, Mansfield Park, her other aunt, Mrs. Norris, constantly reminds her that she is a social inferior in receipt of charity, and treats her badly because of this. Thus

[4] Letter to Minna Kautsky, Nov. 26, 1885. Translation from Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, *Literature and Art*, New York, 1947.

[5] David Lodge, *The Language of Fiction*, London 1966. My comments on *Mansfield Park* owe a lot to the essay on this novel in this book.

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as Mrs. Norris is condemned as a mean and despicable woman, the novel asserts a set of values involving a belief in unselfish charity, by which people should be treated according to their personal needs and merits and their misfortunes should be sympathised with. Although we differ from Jane Austen no doubt on many of the practical details involved in implementing such a moral code, we can in general sympathise fully with it. What causes the confusion in the novel is that when Fanny Price visits her own parents at Portsmouth, her attitude to them is at variance with this implied moral code.

> Fanny was almost stunned. The smallness of the house, and thinness of the walls, brought everything so close to her, that, added to the fatigue of her journey, and all her recent agitation, she hardly knew how to bear it. *Within* the room all was tranquil enough, for Susan having disappeared with the others, there were soon only her father and herself remaining and he taking out a newspaper—the accustomary loan of a neighbour, applied himself to studying it, without seeming to recollect her existence. The solitary candle was held between himself and the paper, without any reference to her possible convenience; but she had nothing to do. and was glad to have the light screened from her aching head, as she sat in bewildered, broken, sorrowful contemplation.
>
> She was at home. But alas! it was not such a home, she had not such a welcome, as———she checked herself; she was unreasonable. What right had she to be of importance to her family? She could have none, so long lost sight of! William's concerns must be dearest—they always had been—and he had every right. Yet to have so little said or asked about herself —to have scarcely an enquiry made about Mansfield! It did pain her to have Mansfield forgotten; the friends who had done so much—the dear, dear friends![6]

To catalogue all the disturbing elements that this and similar passages raise in the context of the novel would take too long, but a few crucial points can be made. First of all, we recollect that the "dear, dear friends" at Mansfield treated Fanny a good deal worse than her father is here treating her, on a number of occasions; he may ignore her but he does not actively persecute her. Not only this, but her totally self-regarding sorrow, within which is to be found none of the sympathy for her parents' lot that the novel demanded for her lot when she first arrived at Mansfield cannot but shock the reader. Further, the reader notes that many of the criticisms implied of the father are pure and simple snobbery: the smallness of the house and the thinness of the walls, the lack of light, and the fact that her father habitually borrowed a newspaper—we cannot respond to these facts as the novel implies we should. Personally I would prefer Mr. Price to Lady Bertram any day, and as I read the novel I am aware that this feeling is not appropriate to the reaction the novel artistically demands. Even Fanny's Uriah-Heepish humility is sickening at this point, and we cease to read on with a respect for the identity of the work, but with our normal habits of mind operating directly in judgement on what is written.

To conclude, I would argue that our inability to respond in a fully appreciative way to *Mansfield Park* is a result not of the fact that our values have changed since the novel was written so much as because the novel lacks the internal consistency to provide an initial context in which to judge its components. Although a great work of art can have an identity which is defined by the context in which it exists—which has as its components such things as the writer's consciousness and situation and the reader's consciousness and situation—a work of art can contain within itself such flaws as will permanently preclude it from full artistic success. The context of our artistic appreciation includes the identity of the work of art, and although it is inevitable that response to a work of art must change over a period of time because the personal and social situation of the reader enters into his response, within this process constant elements can be found. Into the "lasting attraction of art" enter constant and inconstant elements whose relationship is in a state of permanent flux, is a dialectical interconnection.

[6] The Novels of Jane Austen, ed. Chapman, Vol. III, repr. London 1953, p. 382.

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Opposing Trends Within Imperialism—Unity versus Contradiction

Ron Bellamy

Lecture delivered by Ron Bellamy at a Discussion Conference organised by Marx Memorial Library, on February 20, 1971. (The present version is slightly elaborated and revised.)

I

This issue has been discussed in Marxist circles repeatedly since World War 2, not so much because of such anti-socialist alliances as NATO, as because of the existence of world-wide or regional economic organisations like the IMF, Club of Ten, EEC, EFTA, and the more recent and turbulent growth of the (so-called) "international firm".

There have been, at the extremes, two reactions to this inside the labour movement in Britain. From the reformist wing have appeared new versions of a Kautskyesque "organised capitalism" in which contradictions are mollified, and against which the working class has therefore no need to struggle. From the ultra-left comes a vision of a polarisation of the capitalist world into a single world monopolist class and a single world working class—a Monopoly Capitalist Arsenal lined up against a Proletarian United—whose ultimate outcome will be a cataclysmic confrontation and world socialist revolution. Meanwhile all that is required is a passive attitude towards the new possibilities, generated by the polarisation process itself, for immediate gains and for the mobilisation of the anti-imperialist forces. Marxist-Leninists, on the other hand, are concerned to analyse the many-sided complex of contemporary contradictions and not just that between the imperialist powers, or between the capitalist class and the working class. For only by such analysis can one arrive at a correct estimate of new dangers and new possibilities.

The essential viewpoint of this paper, therefore, is to see the contradictions of imperialism as an organic whole, and, above all, to show how the anti-imperialist forces *within* the imperialist world (forces which, after all, consist of ourselves and the wider movement we have the possibility and the responsibility of mobilising) have been historically an element of growing power in determining the outcome of inter-imperialist relations, an element whose potential for still greater influence in the future is objectively advanced by the very same process of development of social production which has given rise to new relations among the capitalist powers. The problem of inter-imperialist contradictions must not be examined in isolation from the growing unity of anti-imperialist currents, that is, of the socialist world system, of the working people of the imperialist countries, and of the peoples struggling against neo-colonialism.

Our approach is therefore sharply contrasted at the outset with approaches (such as that of Ernest Mandel's recent book *Europe versus America*), which, because of a myopic hostility to those branches of the world working class which have constructed the world socialist system, are unable to take account at all of the power which, as the imperialists demonstrate by their behaviour, is the most formidable of the hostile currents against which they must swim.

II. Lenin on Ultra-Imperialism

It is, of course, legitimate for a preliminary analysis to take the relations between the rival imperialist ruling classes momentarily out of their context. The private individual ownership of capital led to the concentration and centralisation of capital, to monopoly and finance capital, and to the export of capital. Once the world was divided into spheres of monopoly privilege, the uneven development of particular capitals and countries necessarily gave rise to struggles for redivision and to imperialist war. The process of capital accumulation has two aspects. First, the growth in the social character of the productive forces necessitates increased centralisation of control, and therefore of ownership, of the capital in which those productive forces are embodied; this is the basis of the "unity". Second, the uneven rate of development of different capitals, stemming from their individual ownership and the (consequently) unco-ordinated nature of their

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separate spontaneous growths, is the basis of the instability, and periodic disruption, of unity.

Lenin's position on this is well-known, and was elaborated in criticism of Kautsky's concept of supra-imperialism, in many places. We shall give one reference:

> "Abstract theoretical reasoning may lead to the conclusion at which Kautsky has arrived—in a somewhat different fashion, but also by abandoning Marxism—namely that the time is not too far off when these magnates of capital will unite on a world scale in a single world trust, substituting an internationally united finance capital for the competition and struggle between sums of finance capital nationally isolated. . . Can it be denied that a new phase of capitalism is imaginable *after* imperialism, namely ultra-imperialism? No, it cannot. Such a phase can be imagined. . . there is no doubt that the trend of development is *towards* a single world trust absorbing all enterprises without exception, and all states without exception. But this development proceeds in such circumstances, at such a pace, through such contradictions, conflicts and upheavals—not only economic, but political, national, etc.,—that inevitably imperialism will burst and capitalism will be transformed into its opposite *long before* one world trust materialises, before the 'ultra-imperialist' world-wide amalgamation of national finance capitals takes place."[1]

In many other places[2] Lenin stressed the disunity of the capitalists, as well as the role of the anti-imperialist forces within imperialism, as important external conditions for the success of the October Revolution. Indeed the whole conception of the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale as a prolonged period of co-existence rested upon the assumed continuance of a fundamental feature of capitalism, namely the operation of the law of uneven development, and the disunity of world capitalism.

At the same time, it might be argued that Lenin's critique of organised capitalism, as contained in the passage above, as well as in his famous comments on the slogan of a "United States of Europe"[3] was made before the USSR came into existence, and the remarks on the disunity of the capitalists, though made after the October Revolution, still referred to a temporary phase before the relative stabilisation of capitalism, a phase in which imperialist policies were still influenced by the war-weariness of their peoples.

Over the longer run, why should not the entirely new feature in world economics and politics, the existence of a socialist state, create a union of Great Powers both to compete economically with the large-scale social production which socialism makes possible, and to extend the scope of "opposing and plundering" to the USSR itself, especially as the political annihilation of a working class state has common class advantages for all capitalists alike?

One cannot attempt an answer to that question without putting the inter-imperialist relationship back into its full context. Today that context includes socialism, and socialism at a very different historical stage of development and strength from that of Lenin's time. But even already before 1914 the very concentration and centralisation of capital had advanced the polarisation of society and the concentration of the proletariat in large-scale industry, and thus provided more favourable objective conditions for the struggle of the working class and for its support by new anti-monopoly allies.

True, the very super-profits which arose from the export of capital created the material basis for opportunism within the working class, but the outbreak of imperialist war shattered the illusions of easy gains. The working class within each imperialist country and on a world scale began to unite against imperialist war. Thus the mainstream of the many confluent revolutionary currents was replenished. But the same export of capital also brought new classes, strata and nations into opposition to imperialism. The fight for national liberation was united with the proletarian and peasant struggles against imperialism and war; and in one country where the objective conditions for the unity of revolutionary currents were most powerful and where a mature working class and class party existed to take advantage of them, a socialist revolution resulted.

Thus for the period before and during World War I, the *leading* contradiction, the one historically growing and developing (and destined to become the decisive one in the Tsarist Empire) was that between capital and labour. But the *principal* contradiction, that which dominated the world social process was the antagonism between the imperialist powers. For

[1] *Lenin:* Preface to Bukharin's pamphlet "Imperialism and the World Economy" Collected Works Vol. 22. p. 105-107 passim.

[2] e.g. Report to the 9th Congress of the RCP., and the comments on the Genoa Conference on trade with the capitalist countries in Report to the 11th Congress of the RCP. Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 275 (9th Congress), and Vol. 33, pp. 263-5 (11th Congress).

[3] e.g. especially: ". . . either this is a slogan which cannot be implemented under capitalism, inasmuch as it presupposes the establishment of a planned world economy, with partition of colonies, spheres of influence, etc., among the individual countries, or else it is a reactionary slogan, one that signifies a temporary union of the Great Powers of Europe with the aim of enhancing the oppression of the colonies and of plundering the more rapidly developing countries—Japan and America". Lenin: On the Slogan for a United States of Europe. Collected Works, Vol. 21. p. 344.

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the capitalist class everywhere held economic and political power, and the forces against it were either too weak (as in the colonies) or too divided (as was the working class by opportunism). But as the inter-imperialist war developed and weakened the capitalists politically vis-à-vis their internal enemies, the united strength of the anti-imperialist forces grew so great that at one point they were able to break through and destroy capitalism.

III—The Inter-War Period

Let us test our hypothesis further by the evidence of the inter-war period. The first imperialist world war finished with an inter-imperialist carve up, opposed not only by the advanced working class forces in the imperialist countries, but also, for the first time, by a working class state, whose mere existence reduced the size of the joint to be carved.

But through the operation of the law of uneven development, the inter-imperialist antagonism was reproduced inside the capitalist world-system; a new struggle for redivision of the world began. This took place against a background internally of a higher stage of development of the struggle between capital and labour, and of the forces of national liberation against imperialist domination.

The cyclical economic crisis of the 1930's aggravated the struggle for profits, for markets and spheres of influence, and raised its plane from the economic, trade, and currency wars to political and military preparations for a new war of redivision. Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931, Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1935, the Nazis occupied the Rhineland in 1936, and Nazi and Italian fascist troops overran Republican Spain in 1936-39.

But after 1917 there was a new feature in the situation. All the contradictions within the capitalist system now developed in a world in which imperialism was no longer the only social and economic system. Class and national liberation struggles were profoundly affected politically and ideologically (and even to a small extent materially) by the fact that one national detachment of the working class and peasantry held political power, owned the key means of production, and was demonstrating the feasibility, even superiority, of a socialist economy. To read today the proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928, to study the role of the RILU or of the International Labour Defence, is to feel how these new phenomena despite mistakes, represented a new level in the unity and strength of anti-imperialist revolutionary currents.

The imperialist ruling classes, on their side, had a new enemy in common, or rather an old enemy in a new and more dangerous guise—the working class and peoples of exploited nations actually in power. Moreover, the scope of imperialist world domination included plundering the rich tracts of the USSR just as much as those of Asia, Africa, the Americas or Europe.

A New Phenomenon

Hence there appeared on the imperialist side also a new phenomenon—the old inter-imperialist antagonism mediated by a new feature, the inter-imperialist partnership against socialism. The dualism of this relationship between the imperialist powers, expressed succinctly (first, I think, by R. P. Dutt in respect of the relation between the USA and Britain after 1945) in the concept "antagonistic partnership", explains the two contradictory trends in the policies of the imperialist states during the inter-war period. On the one side, there was the willingness of some imperialist powers to connive at the growth in strength of their bitterest capitalist rivals, especially when the latter were situated on or near to the borders of the USSR (e.g. Germany, Japan), and even more if they had suppressed their own working class in preparation for war, and were not only anti-communist, anti-socialist, anti- democratic at home, but anti-soviet abroad. This connivance with Japan, Italy and Nazi Germany was particularly characteristic of the dominant sections of the British ruling class between 1931 and 1939. Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary, defended Japan's invasion of Manchuria; British governments sabotaged the sanctions against Italy, facilitated the Hitler-Mussolini-Franco victory in Spain, helped Nazi Germany in 1935 to obtain submarines and pocket battleships.

But on the other side some imperialist and capitalist powers, or at least important sections of their ruling classes, partly under internal pressure from movements against war and aggression, partly fearful that the imperialist aggressors might attack them rather than (or at least before) the Soviet Union, began to resist rather than connive in a redivision of the world. Among the imperialist powers, France was such a case, and at a later stage, the United States; and among the bourgeois states more generally, Czechoslovakia and China. The peoples of these countries in which bourgeois democracy had not been crushed, fearful of a new imperialist war, began also to seek allies in its prevention.

It was at this stage that a new element began to intervene in the inter-imperialist struggle for world domination, namely the active diplomacy, especially in the League of Nations, of the one socialist state. This was a new development, because earlier the Soviet Union had condemned the League of Nations as an agency for dividing the world in the interests of the imperialist powers.[4] By 1935 things had

[4] In his interview with the American Labour Delegation in 1927, Stalin had made this estimate. But it should be noted that it was made before the Great

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changed. The Japanese attack on Manchuria was, as became recognised afterwards, the first campaign in World War II. Nazi rearmament had begun in 1934, and in the same year the fascist powers had left the League of Nations. In 1934 the USSR joined it. In 1935 the Franco-Soviet Pact was signed; in 1935 Czechoslovakia made a Mutual Assistance Pact with the USSR. In 1936 the USSR gave economic and military aid to Republican Spain.

Inside the imperialist world the working class led wide sections of the people (in Britain initially against the hostility of the leadership of the TUC and of the Labour Party) in the fight for collective security, and for the formation of anti-fascist alliances, not only with the USA, France, China and Czechoslovakia, to contain the fascist powers and prevent a new imperialist war, but above all with the USSR. The forces of national liberation were incensed by the attack on China and Abyssinia, as well as by the British-led manoeuvres to redistribute colonies in favour of Nazi Germany, but they were after all still operating under the difficult conditions of colonialism and had, at that stage, a limited role.

In the event, the unity of the forces against a new war of redivision was not strong enough to prevent that war, nor, once it had started, to prevent sections of the ruling classes, more fearful of the USSR and their own working classes than of concessions to fascism, from creating conditions for capitulation (as in France) or for more open collaboration (the attempts in Britain during the winter of 1939-40 to turn the Finnish war into an anti-soviet war).

From the 1938 invasion of Austria, through Munich, through the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, through the defeat of the Spanish Republic, through the phoney war, the fall of France, to the Nazi occupation of Europe—these were indeed bitter days for the working class and progressive movement, days of retreat and temporary defeat. Yet now we can see that every rearguard action during those years, every act of resistance, contributed to the strategic building up of those political forces which, in Britain, prevented the turning of the inactive phoney war into a joint attack on socialism, contributed to forcing the internal political changes which strengthened the popular, anti-fascist element in the war. In Europe, under the harsher conditions of Nazi rule, and even within Nazi Germany itself, the anti-imperialist forces contributed to harassing and diverting resources from the main front of the Nazi attack, the USSR.

Balance Sheet

It is true that the unity of revolutionary currents was neither able to stop the imperialist war from breaking out, nor was it able to prevent it turning into an attempt to destroy the first base of the working class in power. But—and it is a vital "but"—the imperialists were not able either, partly because of their own rivalry, partly because of the moral and military strength of the USSR, partly because of the actions of the other anti-imperialist forces, to unite against socialism. As a result, the character of the war changed.

What had begun primarily as an inter-imperialist, anti-popular, war ended—after sacrifices which the anti-imperialist forces had striven hard to make unnecessary—not *mainly* as a victory of imperialist USA, Britain and France over imperialist Germany, Italy, and Japan, not *mainly* with an annexationist peace, but as a victory of socialist and popular forces over imperialist reaction. That some of these forces were tragically and criminally dispersed, divided and split by opportunist leaders in the European labour movement—a dispersal from which, 25 years later, we in Britain are just beginning to recover—is true. But the fact remains that it would be quite wrong to treat the period of struggle against fascism—1933-45 as a period in which the inter-imperialist relationship either as antagonism or as partnership, totally dominated the scene. On the contrary, it was a period in which the anti-imperialist forces, after initial defeats and at tragic cost, began to influence the direction of world events in a way they had never done before. It is no denigration of the skill, heroism and sacrifice of other contingents of the anti-imperialist movement to say that the USSR, if only because it represented state power in the hands of working people, was the most decisive contingent in that movement.

Let us summarise that period. The October revolution brought into existence a new contradiction, that between imperialism and socialism. While socialism was the side of the contradiction which developed fastest, and was the *leading* aspect in the sense that it represented a forward looking system, it was still an infant. The *principal*, decisive side of this contradiction was imperialism. That is why one speaks of that period as one of imperialist encirclement of socialism. It follows that the contradictions *internal* to imperialism proceeded *substantially* in the old way, even if increasingly modified by the new factor in the situation. One important such modification, we have seen, was the

Economic Crisis of the 1930's had sharpened great power rivalries further, and before the German working class movement, the strongest in Europe, had been crushed by fascism. In 1927 it was not clear that the possibilities for further socialist revolution in Europe, above all in Germany, might not be converted into actuality in the context of the expected economic crisis. Further, 1927 was before the First Five Year Plan for heavy industry, and therefore before the USSR was capable of playing a serious military role in the inter-imperialist balance of forces.

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conversion of the inter-imperialist relationships from simple antagonism to antagonistic partnership.

Yet when the crunch came, the forces for partnership were not able to overcome the forces of antagonism. Hence there was to be found instability of both partnership and of antagonism, with oscillation from one to the other in particular imperialist countries. France, for example moved from the 1935 Franco-Soviet Pact, through capitulation and collaboration under Vichy, back to Resistance and to de Gaulle; while Britain moved in the reverse direction from Munich to Churchill. In both cases the changes were conditioned both by the material strength of the USSR and by the changing balance of internal forces, as the implications of Nazi victory became clearer not only to sections of monopoly capital, but to the people as a whole. Thus, on the one hand the predominance of antagonism over partnership, or the converse, reflected the class interests of the monopolists in each country.

But the behaviour of each imperialist country, especially when there was instability and division within its ruling class, was powerfully influenced by the activities of anti-monopoly forces, given sufficient unity and powerful leadership on the side of the working class. This latter, and not the attitudes and interests of monopoly capital, was the developing factor, which explains the final outcome of the period 1917-45.

IV—The Period After 1945

For the period since World War II it seems to us that we should start the analysis from the position that the anti-imperialist forces are beginning to be the decisive element in world economy and politics. Without making concessions to complacency, or assuming to be fully matured what exists only in embryo, it seems none the less right to say that the period of capitalist encirclement is ending, and the period of isolation of imperialism from without and within is beginning. The underlying causes of this reversal are well-established in Marxist-Leninist thinking.

First, the growth in the size, in the military, political and economic strength of the world socialist system is such that it is able to resist and therefore to preclude attack upon itself, to aid other anti-imperialist forces, especially those in the young nation states, and is able to attract even this or that imperialist power by its capacity as a market, and by its capacity to enter into effective political alliances. As inter-imperialist antagonisms grow, both these capacities take on added significance.

Second, the very rapid development in the centralisation of capital, required by new forces of the scientific-technical revolution in the developed capitalist countries, has sharply accelerated the polarisation of classes, the concentration of the working class, and by accelerating the export of capital has begun to threaten the economic and political independence of even large imperialist nations.

Third, the struggle of the young nation states against neo-colonialism, as well as the continuing struggle against the remnants of colonialism, has made the world gendarme role, especially of the United States, enormously expensive to the monopolists. As they seek to transfer the costs to the working people of the metropolitan countries, the material basis for opportunism within the working class is weakened.

Against this background (one of growing *external* constraints upon monopoly capital's freedom of manoeuvre) the laws of capitalism, as a *relatively* independent social system, continue to operate. We have already indicated the effects which this has had upon the objective growth of the anti-imperialist internal forces. Capitalism is still based upon private, individual (including collective-individual) ownership of the means of production not only within each capitalist country but (even if it were argued that within capitalist countries "organised" capitalism had been established under state aegis—a proposition we do not, in fact, accept) on what is becoming, for the giant concerns, the only relevant arena, that of the capitalist world as a whole. Each individual group seeks, as always, its own advantage, its own dominance. Anarchy of production and uneven development operate under state-monopoly capitalism not with less, but with (in our opinion) greater force than under simple monopoly capitalism. Even those who dispute this for the internal development of each country must nevertheless admit it for the world arena, since there is no "world" market separate from the internal markets of the main imperialist countries: on the contrary they are the biggest part of the world capitalist market. Hence the law of the centralisation of capital and the law of uneven development of different capitals interact. The centralisation, the growing unity, of capital is established through temporary resolution and recreation, at a higher level, of inter-monopolist contradictions. Suppose, for example that the EEC were able, given long enough,[5] to create a new state-monopoly capitalism of Western Europe, it seems to us that, so far from weakening the contradictions of capitalism *on a world scale*, such a development would strengthen them. For it would be directed towards the more effective struggle of

[5] As I revise this paper, the new monetary crisis of May 1970 has demonstrated the very deep splits which exist between the partners of the EEC, and many commentators in the Western financial press state that its intended development from customs union to economic union is already in jeopardy before the initial steps have been taken.

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European monopoly against that of the United States and Japan.

Exaggerated Assertions

But, at this stage, at least, assertions of the existence of a supra-national monopoly capitalism are grossly exaggerated, with weak foundation in reality. The further centralisation of capital, made necessary by the character of modern productive forces, takes as its starting point long-established groupings of finance capital, bound to each other and to the national imperialist state as national state-monopoly capital. Even where apparently "supra-national" companies exist, supported by the joint action of more than one state (e.g. the companies jointly owned by British and Dutch monopoly capital such as Shell and Unilever) the question which of these national capitals is dominant is neither settled for all time, nor is it determined, under *state*-monopoly capitalism, solely by the relative economic strengths of the national private groups. Therefore the reconciliation of the interests of two national monopoly capitals, their formation into a single, "organised", "supra-national" monopoly, always represents the domination of the stronger over the weaker, or an uneasy equilibrium prior to it.

It is precisely the fear—and the entirely realistic fear—on the part of French monopoly capital that further centralisation of capital through the "supra-national" organs of the EEC Commission would mean the dominance by West German monopoly capital that has led France to wish the form of monopolist integration for Europe to be a "Europe des patries". For the supra-national form, with the *appearance* of reconciliation of interests, conceals the essential content, domination by the stronger imperialism.

True, as we have shown for the inter-war period, there is also a unity of the imperialist powers in their antagonism to socialist and young nation states. Relying on this unity, the United States has attempted in the period since World War II, to develop its potential rival, the EEC, as a bridgehead against socialism. However, with the present balance of world forces and with modern weapons, to be such a bridgehead implies, for the monopoly capitalist states of Europe (to say nothing of their peoples!) committing suicide in the interests of survival of monopoly capitalism in general.

But capitalism is based upon the pursuit of private individual profit, profit for one's own capital, not for capital in general, and even less for the capital of one's principal rivals. The question is therefore posed increasingly for the monopoly capitalists of particular countries or areas: "if we cannot, without risk of destruction by external forces, or of dangerous revolt from within, seek common expansion by carving up the socialist world, where do our best interests lie? As always, we prepare to defend our profits and privileges against all opponents. But we take action first against those who put up the weakest resistance. Profits depend, on the one side, upon what share of the market we can get at the expense of rivals." There are still remnants of small and middle capital to be eliminated or absorbed, even though the merger movement of the last decade has gone a long way towards transforming these capitals from subordinate positions in a modern putting-out system to total elimination as independent capital; but the process is not yet complete, since the modern equivalent of Lenin's "competitive sector existing alongside monopoly" is the smaller and middle giants, yet to be swallowed up by the super-giants.

Profits depend, on the other side, upon costs of labour and materials. To reduce these the monopolist rationalises production, sheds labour (and not only manual labour), and puts pressure upon all the weaker classes and strata of his own country and, to a greater extent than before, upon the weaker imperialist countries to which he exports capital, as well as upon suppliers of all classes in the young national states. The polarisation process accelerates within the capitalist world as a whole, and with it the objective basis for anti-monopoly unity.

From this argument a question emerges: in the process of the antagonistic partnership can there be no transitional phenomena, no neutrals, no imperialist states becoming increasingly cool to the aims of partnership, seeking a *modus vivendi* with socialism? For example, one may contrast France's relation to NATO with that of a decade ago, or one may contrast the contemporary massive abandonment by almost every NATO state of the strategic economic embargoes on trade with socialist states with the cordon sanitaire of two decades ago. Just as during the inter-war period differentiation within the imperialist powers existed, with Britain, France and the USA on the one side, and the Axis powers on the other, can one not see today a tendency for the weaker imperialist powers to seek some accommodation with socialism?

Of course, such accommodation, as in the past, may be only temporary, conditional, unstable. But to the degree that it arises not only from inter-imperialist rivalries, but also from the growing pressure of the internal anti-monoply forces within this or that imperialist country, it becomes firmer, more stable. One might usefully draw a parallel with the Marxist-Leninist conception that, in respect of internal social change, the transition from state-monopoly capitalism to socialism can—given the strength of the anti-monopoly forces—pass through a stage, however short and unstable, in which national-democratic anti-monopoly forms of ownership and control can be initiated as a bridgehead for

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further advance towards socialism.

Similarly, in the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale, the long period of peaceful co-existence necessarily involves transitional stages during which particular capitalist, even imperialist, countries can be compelled by the balance of external and internal forces to seek their particular salvation by betraying the interests of world capitalism as a whole. Of course that path will be followed only if the external and internal anti-imperialist forces are able to avoid subjective mistakes, if they take full advantage of the growing objective possibilities offered them by the internal contradictions of capitalism on the one hand, and, on the other, by the greater capacity of socialist production relations to make use of the potential offered by the increasingly social nature of modern productive forces.

Since 1963 socialist world production has increased by nearly 70 per cent, that of the capitalist world by about 50 per cent. There has been a rapid growth of polarisation in the main imperialist countries and a sharpening of the class struggle. There has been also, despite severe setbacks in particular regions, an advance of the maturity of the forces for national liberation in the third world, as well as new conditions for its growth within the weaker imperialist countries themselves. Individual monopolists are finding markets, and their bankers a return on loans, by—paradoxically enough—helping forward the growth of the productive forces in the socialist world. If one compares the Vietnam war with that in Korea 20 years ago, the Americans now have no military (though still political) support from Britain, and open opposition from France. In place of a popular anti-socialist crusade under the banner of UN, we have now disunity, disarray, and the growing external isolation of American imperialism. Within the imperialist world, antagonisms become deeper on the trade and financial front between Japan, the EEC and the USA. All the monopolists attempt to recoup by sharper attacks upon their peoples. But the peoples resist and the forces for national independence and democracy grow.

V—Conclusion

To say that, with the changed balance of forces against it, imperialism *needs* greater unity for survival is not at all to say that it *has the means* to attain it. If the balance in question were only that between imperialism and the socialist world system, if there were no new balance of forces within imperialism itself, and if that latter balance were not strengthened by the balance of socialism as against imperialism, matters would be different. But in the real world, imperialist ruling classes can find the material and human resources for struggle against socialism, especially as the relative power of the latter increases, only by increased exploitation and oppression of all non-monopoly classes and strata. The objective conditions grow for class and anti-imperialist struggle and for the unity of the two streams.

(Continued on p. 348)

Document:

From the Report to the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party

Erich Honecker

We print below an extract from Section 2 of the Report made by Erich Honecker, the recently elected First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany to the above Congress. This was held in June. This report and that by Willi Stoph were among the main matters discussed at the Congress. Some sub-heads have been added by us.

The Results of Our Work, the Goals and Basic Tasks of Our Economic Policy

Comrade Delegates

The Central Committee can report at this Party Congress that the basic scientific, technical, economic and social objectives laid down by the 1966-1970 five-year plan have been fulfilled and in some cases over-fulfilled.

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How much effort, how much steadfast diligence, how much creative energy on the part of the working people are behind this statement! We are aware of the magnitude of the demands and the at times difficult conditions in which these achievements were reached. Five years of diligent work have further consolidated our Socialist fatherland and made it more beautiful. The working class, co-operative farmers, members of the intelligentsia, all sections of our people have made their contribution, all classes and strata, the various occupational groups, the numerous production teams, women and men, young people and old.

As is known, Lenin characterised the task of economic development as an extraordinarily important one, because the struggle on the world scale is conducted primarily in this field. "Once we solve this problem", Lenin said, "we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale."[1] We have always been guided by this principle. We have concentrated the efforts of the party particularly on this question.

Our national income rose by more than 25 per cent during the past five years and amounted to 108 thousand million marks in 1970. A large contribution was again made by the working class, which, together with the Socialist intelligentsia and other working people, has increased industrial commodity production by 37 per cent. Today, our enterprises produce as much in less than nine months as they did in the whole of 1965.

Workers, scientists and technicians have proved themselves at various new tasks. Half of the products manufactured by our metalworking industry in 1970 were introduced into production only in the past five-year plan. The degree of automation and mechanisation in industry has increased still further.

The output of the electronics and machine tool industry has increased considerably. The chemical industry, too, has considerably surpassed the average rate of growth of industrial production. In everyday life, this change in the production pattern expresses itself in an increasing supply of consumer goods made of plastics and chemical fibres. It has been possible to increase the output of the chemical industry in our republic thanks to the fact that the processing of Soviet oil has been doubled as planned. The GDR's import demand for rolled steel and pipe, timber and cotton was covered almost completely from foreign trade with the Soviet Union in the past five years.

Power Stations

The Thierbach and Boxberg power stations and the GDR's second atomic power station which have been or are being built with Soviet equipment and with the aid of Soviet specialists are a visible expression of the ever more comprehensive scientific, technical and economic integration with our great brother country. Another example of fruitful co-operation is the successful development of the SDAG Wismut. Considerable progress has also been made in the co-operation with the other member states of the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance).

The co-operative farmers of the GDR have well mastered their task of supplying the population with staple foodstuffs mainly from their own resources and of supplying industry with important raw materials. The citizens of the republic have followed with special sympathy and respect the struggle of all those working in agriculture against the caprices of the weather in recent years. The weather has not been too well disposed towards us lately; the northern parts of our country have again lived through an extended period of drought in recent weeks. But in good days and bad the superiority of our Socialist agriculture was also proved in the period following the Seventh Party Congress. Modern co-operative and state farming facilities for the industrial production of farm products have come into being. The supply of cities and workers' centres with meat, fresh eggs, broilers and vegetables has, above all, improved as a result.

The working people engaged in Socialist trade are handling a considerably larger turnover of goods. They have shown a considerable measure of originality and developed rational and modern methods of trade in many towns and villages. New department stores, supermarkets, hotels and restaurants have been built.

The teachers and all persons engaged in the field of education have made valuable progress. In 1970, 85 per cent of all pupils who completed the eighth form went on to complete the 10-year secondary school. The number of students at technical schools and colleges has reached 302,400, which is an increase of more than 70,000.

The scientists, artists and journalists, physicians, nurses and health service workers, the people working in public transport, the soldiers and officers have also contributed a worthy share towards the good record of achievements. We shall deal with this aspect in the course of this report. We are pleased to report that the members and candidates of our party were always in the front ranks wherever these great achievements were in the making.

All in all the work has been successful, and it has proved worthwhile for the citizens of our state. Many of our towns and communities have become more beautiful. Important demands felt, no doubt, to be essential by all our people could be satisfied more fully. I am thinking here of the increases in the

[1] V.I. Lenin "Speech at the Tenth All Russian Congress of the RCP (B)", *Selected Works*, Vol 3, Moscow, 1967 p. 614.

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minimum pensions and wages and the increases in income for certain occupational groups. At the same time everyone has a share in the fruits of the joint efforts. Real income increased by a good fifth in five years. Our people's level of education and culture has experienced further growth. The five-day work week gives everybody more leisure time and is thus particularly beneficial to family life.

In our joy at the successes, we do not overlook the unsatisfactorily mastered tasks, the remaining difficulties and vexations. This applies for instance to the lag in power production and the supply industry, the gaps in supplies to the people and in housing construction. Despite the fact that 364,000 flats have been built and renovated by the building industry—this is equivalent to the number of dwellings in Karl Marx Stadt, Magdeburg, Halle and Zwickau taken together—not all targets set have been reached.

New problems of development cropped up in the course of the five-year plan period ending in 1970, some disproportions in the national economy have had detrimental influences. Comrades, as Lenin taught, our party must never shrink from seeing reality as it is and from soberly assessing the situation. The Central Committee acted accordingly. At its 14th session it analysed the experience of recent years and drew the appropriate conclusions. These primarily concern the measures to be taken to guarantee the planned and proportional development of the national economy, the utilisation of the economic laws of Socialism and the realistic assessment of our capacities and possibilities. . . .

On the Main Task of the 1971-1975 Five-Year Plan

In his report Comrade Willi Stoph will deal in detail with the objectives outlined in the Directives. I shall concentrate on the principal task of the next five-year plan and deal with some fundamental questions connected with carrying it out.

The draft Directives state: "The principal task of the five-year plan consists in further raising the material and cultural standard of living of the people on the basis of a rapid rate of development of Socialist production, in increasing effectiveness and scientific and technical progress, and in accelerating the rate of growth of labour productivity."

This formulates the objective of our economic activity in its indissoluble connection with the conditions that must be created for this purpose. Our people have learned an important lesson in life, namely, that our society can never consume more than has been produced. Better satisfaction of the needs of the people presupposes diligent work, expert knowledge and a sense of responsibility on the part of each and every one of us, regardless of the place he occupies in our great community in discharging his duties.

The principal task of the 1971-1975 five-year plan outlines the entire economic and political programme. The objective complies with the basic economic law of Socialism. In our society, economics is a means to an end, the means for constantly improving the satisfaction of the growing material and cultural needs of the working people.

Naturally, our party has also been guided by this principle in the past. But in the further course of development of Socialist society and its economic potential, the influence of this law-governed connection between production and the needs of the people must be increasingly brought to bear. We take this into account in the principal task confronting us.

Nevertheless, we proceed also in this important question from a sober standpoint and assess our possibilities realistically. Our means for improving working and living conditions grow continuously in line with systematic successful work, they do not increase by leaps and bounds. For this reason we must carefully examine where such improvements are most urgent and where particularly important progress can be made for our working people with the available resources.

The Directives state that the real income of the population will increase by 21 to 23 per cent from 1971 to 1975. Earnings are to increase by an average of 4 per cent per year. The fact that this year we have raised minimum wages and increased the wages of some occupational categories which do socially important work, but had too low earnings, has met with wide approval. These important measures set forth in our five-year plan mark out the direction in which we shall continue in accord with the existing possibilities. We shall continue using wages as the chief form of material incentive. The Directives reflect our intention of creating the conditions that will make it possible for us in the course of these five years to calculate pensions based on the old form of calculation in accordance with the principles of the new pension rights introduced in 1968. This would be an arrangement to which we have attached a great deal of importance for a long time, but which we did not yet have sufficient means to realise.

More Housing

We are also aware of the fact that we need more housing in order to satisfy the urgent needs of families, especially of our young people who marry and raise families. We have again and again taken stock of our possibilities with our comrades working in the field of housing development in order to attain a higher rate of growth than in the past. Consequently, we are now planning to hand over half a million flats to the working people in the period from 1971 to 1975. The entire problem is to be solved by building new and modernising, reconstructing and developing existing housing. We should like to

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emphasise in this connection that we consider it very important to improve the living conditions of workers in the industrial centres. Finally, we are planning to develop the workers' housing construction co-operatives still further and to promote individual building undertakings with the participation of the population through their own work and their own means. We are also of the opinion that the co-operating agricultural production co-operatives and state farms should build 5,000 flats per year for their co-operative farmers and agricultural workers on their own.

It goes without saying that such a programme calls for great efforts and still greater initiative. This is a considerable task for our builders. But we also count on the enthusiasm of the young people in doing work that is so important in their lives, namely, building new and beautiful homes.

We must not omit mentioning another problem whose significance will increase in the years to come. This is the problem of protecting the environment, of preventing air and water pollution, of reducing industrial and traffic noise. To be sure, money is the one thing that we need for this purpose. It is true that we shall make progress only gradually. But even today many things could be practically improved if the state and economic authorities mobilise all available resources that have a bearing on this problem and bear in mind the welfare of the working people.

I should like to refer to another of the measures aimed at further improving living conditions, which we regard as particularly urgent and essential: supplying the population with goods of everyday use, consumer goods, spare parts and services. The gaps and delays in this area are rightly criticised by many working people. We must not become accustomed to neglecting the thousand and one little things. Improvements in supplies to the population, and above all stability and continuity would mean a substantial improvement in everyday life and would eliminate many sources of friction and vexation.

We are determined seriously to come to grips with this problem. But we have to overcome considerable difficulties, create stable conditions in production, and to take into account additional factors involved. The essential conclusions must be drawn in respect to managerial work. The Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers have adopted appropriate measures in this connection.

Some disturbances in proportionality naturally have a bearing also on supply. In addition, we cannot disregard the fact that the planned rapid increase of exports is of vital significance for our economy and that they cannot be reduced.

More Consumer Goods

Thus, results will be reached only gradually. But we shall follow through to the end the task of ensuring a stable and continuous supply in a consistent manner. Special obligations arise out of the over-all objectives for a number of branches of the economy. The Directives provide for a systematic increase in the production of industrial consumer goods and agricultural produce. The commodities for supplying the people will be increased from a value of 65 thousand million marks in 1970 to between 79 and 80 thousand million marks in 1975.

The objective fixed is to increase the production of the consumer goods industries. But the initiation and expansion of production of everyday commodities is a question that concerns all branches of industry as well. Each enterprise and each branch of industry shall examine what contribution can be made for this purpose.

Everyone should be aware of the fact that the principal task formulated in the draft involves a new approach to management, planning and organisation of the supply of consumer goods. In future, consumer demand is to be regarded as one of the decisive criteria and a yardstick for joint work, for employing production capacities, raw materials, materials and means of rationalisation in planning and balancing production and supply.

Goods of everyday use such as staple foodstuffs, children's articles, spare parts and accessories and the so-called thousand and one little things must be produced and marketed in sufficient quantity and quality. The more urgent the supply problems to be solved, the more conscientiously should the demand and the orders by retail trade become the object of Socialist team work and of a flexible reaction by trade and industry. . . .

The Trade Unions

We are convinced that in the further development of our society the trade unions in which almost the entire working class is organised will assume still greater importance. A considerable part of the influence the leading class exerts on the economy and on society takes place—in accordance with our Socialist Constitution—with the help of the trade unions, in the everyday life of trade union activities.

Again and again we note with satisfaction that workers take the floor in meetings of trade unionists and their representatives, in the permanent production councils and in many trade union commissions, and submit proposals for the organisation of our Socialist life. The effectiveness of the members from production elected to the social councils is all the higher the more closely they are linked with managerial problems in their enterprise. We also note with full satisfaction how the wealth of ideas of the innovators and of all industrious workers takes effect in Socialist emulation. That, dear com-

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rades, is an eloquent expression of our Socialist democracy.

The Central Committee directs the special attention of the trade unions to Socialist emulation. The creative competition opening up the rich wealth of ideas, the experience and imaginative spirit of all working people is indispensable for our systematic economic progress. We know very well that it is above all in this field that the further growth of the working class itself and the development of its team work, its friendly relations with the other classes and strata of the working people takes place—which is vital for the progress of Socialism. . . .

Education

Our general policy is based on the fact that the rearing of a young generation worthy of the working class is one of the most important tasks of the working class itself. It is a good tradition that the workers in the enterprises are exerting a direct influence on the rearing of young people, convey to them their experience in class struggle and instil into them the spirit of workers' honour. This tradition should be cultivated.

Vocational training is an important period in the life of young people. The major portion of all young people, boys as well as girls, will continue to have to do productive work as Socialist skilled workers and to learn steadily at the same time. The content and methods of vocational training have undergone substantial changes since the Seventh Party Congress. A total of 99 per cent of all pupils leaving school who do not continue on in the secondary school receive vocational training. Even those pupils who have not yet been able to complete the 9th and 10th forms for the most part reach the 10-year secondary school level at the vocational school.

New descriptions of vocations have been elaborated and new vocational training programmes introduced. They include 29 basic trades which represent new types of vocation and make it possible to train versatile skilled workers. New vocational subjects such as electronics, control engineering and data processing were introduced in all fields of vocational training. If we concentrate on basic trades, that does not mean that we intend to do away with the other necessary trades. Or does anyone think that when we have completed building Socialism we shall no longer need hairdressers?

At this stage it is important that the new programmes are implemented effectively in each enterprise and in each vocational training school. This is true for theoretical and practical training and for convincing instruction in the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The rapidly progressing social development makes it imperative to create a wide range of facilities for training working people and to utilise these facilities effectively. This applies also particularly to the training of women working in production to become skilled workers.

The reorganisation introduced by the Third Reform of Higher Education and the Academy Reform will have a far-reaching effect on education and science. Work has been started on basically changing training in line with the unity of research and instruction, on developing further training and on concentrating the research forces. The relations with practice are deepening. New forms of management promote Socialist democracy. Scientists and students, workers and office workers have made considerable strides forward.

Two hundred and fifty thousand college and technical school graduates have taken up work in their respective professions in the course of the five-year plan period. New colleges have been founded and the number of students has increased from 225,700 to 302,400. Further increases would surpass our possibilities as well as our present social requirements. It is more important to make full use of the existing training capacities, to work even more effectively and to use the material means more efficiently. The most important thing now is to raise the level of the content of instruction and improve the class education of students.

Scientific competition and scientifically productive studies of students and young scientists have shown good results in creative work. All our past experience proves that the closer the unity between specialised knowledge and solid political knowledge, the more successful are the graduates of our universities and technical schools in life and at work. This is precisely why it is so important that the scientific level and the political impact of the course of training in the principles of Marxism-Leninism should be continuously raised.

(Continued from p. 344)

Naturally, that growth does not happen spontaneously. It depends upon the understanding, skill and determination, above all, of the working class and its leading sections. The knowledge that the objective laws of world development operate in such a way as to increase the opportunities for the anti-imperialist forces and decrease those for imperialism, should give confidence to the anti-imperialist forces that their efforts to restrain imperialism on a world scale, and to break it here or there, can attain their goal.

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Review Article:

Political Power in Africa

Ben Turok

The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat. by Ruth First. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press. £4.20. 513 pages.

Africa's stumbling progress to self realisation has been a cause of deep concern to all those who expected the successes of the anti-colonial struggle to lead on to rapid and fundamental change. These hopes have not been fulfilled and Ruth First sets out to find the reason. She centres her enquiry on the spate of military coups that have erupted over the continent and attempts to determine the conditions that led to them and in what directions these military governments have moved.

Her narrative is gripping and there is an immediacy about the presentation deriving from the vast amount of first hand research that went into the book. It is also a hard hitting book, in parts even harsh in its condemnation, as the journalist jostles the theorist off the pages, but it is bound to remain an indispensable though controversial source-book on Africa for some time to come. No one involved in Africa can afford to ignore this probing analysis which challenges many previously accepted formulae on the character and content of the African Revolution.

Arguing that army coups only occur as a last resort, in a condition of deep crisis, Ruth First declares her object to be to lay the basis for "a general theory of power for newly independent states which explains why they are so vulnerable to army intervention in politics", and to show "the way army interventions in politics reveal the nature of political power and its areas of failure in Africa."

There are two sets of causes for a coup, says Ruth First, the first lies in Africa's weakness in relation to external economic forces which make her highly vulnerable to international pressures, the second lies in the frailty of the new institutions set up in the independent African states. Most of the book is devoted to the second category which she examines from every possible angle using broad sociological generalisations as well as candid close-ups: for instance we see the army institutionally as a sector of the African elite and we are also shown its leading officers as personalities cast in a particular mould by the colonial process.

As may be anticipated from the way the purpose of the book is first formulated the author's view is that army intervention in African politics has not been a useful exercise. With some few exceptions the army remains intact from pre-independence days and its values and traditions are still those imbibed at foreign training establishments. Since the army intervenes largely as an agency outside the newly created political system, and more importantly, without coherent policies of its own, this intervention is sterile. Problems which arise from social and economic causes and find expression in political tensions cannot be resolved by a superficial surgical operation at the top which is all the army can achieve. Inevitably the old tensions and conflicts soon return since their origin lay in fundamental difficulties of a kind which cannot be overcome without thoroughgoing politically-motivated change.

Only an Uneasy Stability

Soon enough, the army comes to recognise its inability to do more than merely hold the ring, and it has to be content with maintaining an uneasy stability that solves little. At the same time, since the army cannot rule without a base, it tends to depend on the existing civil service which is more often than not conservative in outlook and elitist in character. It is by itself incapable of introducing such new measures as will solve the crisis which brought the army to power in the first place.

Furthermore, since the initial crisis arose out of the inability of the government to bring about the progress promised at independence, the army, which is neither familiar with the techniques of popular mobilisation nor able to formulate policies for this purpose, concentrates on administrative measures and reforms which cannot get to the root of things. The coup is therefore seen as a holding operation, with the army unwilling or incapable of releasing the springs of popular participation which can alone bring backward economies into motion.

Ruth First flails the army leaders and their civil counterparts in the elite with some pretty hard judgements. She details vast evidence of acquisitiveness and selfishness and describes with a wealth of supporting material the competitiveness and rivalry between the different sectors for the plums of office.

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The elite emerges from her description as a reactionary force, holding Africa to ransom, inhibiting the political development of the masses and damning Africa to perpetual internecine strife. While not doubting the evidence presented to us one is nevertheless bound to ask whether the picture conjured up is adequate and the analysis sufficiently helpful. That there have been devastating setbacks in Africa is common cause, but is it correct to infer from them that the objective conditions were hopeless from the start? Or that one can dismiss so categorically the political forces which rallied Africa in the early sixties? And has the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist dynamic been wholly spent? Ruth First says, "But taking the continent as a whole, the independence 'revolution' in Africa was brief, makeshift and leaky. It came precipitated as much if not more by thrusts from beyond the continent as by sustained and articulated social revolution from within." And she accepts Fanon's depiction of the process of "false decolonisation" as a largely phoney transfer of power to a Black administration. There was a great deal of sleight of hand in the process of the transfer of formal political power but what is now better understood is why this was accepted even by African radicals. Fundamentally their acquiescence lay in their fear that they had no alternative, and their hope that in time political independence would bring economic development and hence total independence. But this was not to be and as the decade wore on their frustration became subordinate to acceptance. Dependence remains the overall condition of most of Africa holding back progress everywhere.

But present day setbacks ought not to obliterate from our memories the very real anti-colonial movements of the early sixties, and the anti-imperialist element in African politics is far from dead. Even in some of the elitist sectors there is a political potential for renewed struggle against imperialism, when a force capable of giving it voice emerges once again. Recognition that the African Revolution has aborted is widespread and what is now underway is an evaluation of what went wrong and how it can be rectified. Perhaps the political articulation of the next stage will take time, and the blurred edges of class stratification in Africa makes it difficult to see in what form it will emerge, but that the resurgence of political action will embrace a wide spectrum of social forces seems most likely. And it is my guess that the working class which is so often dismissed as a "labour aristocracy" but which is really both insecure and impoverished will play an important part in the process of resurgence as the internal antagonisms sharpen. Will there be intellectuals and other petty bourgeois elements to support a new radical political initiative? Miss First's analysis would tend to a negative answer since her condemnation of these groupings is almost total. This reviewer however has his doubts on this score and feels that she is forcing a blanket theory of group interest on to what remains an extremely volatile and unstable scene.

Even if we were now to accept that the African Revolution did not have the sweep we once attributed to it, it nevertheless gave rise to high expectations throughout the continent. Since these expectations were only satisfied for a tiny minority, contradictions remain even among the elite. This aspect might have emerged more sharply if the book had dealt more fully with the questions touched on so lightly in the last few pages. Ruth First says: "This book has concentrated on the shape of power inside Africa; not, on the power over Africa exercised by investment capital, credit, trade and diplomacy. That is another book, and a required companion to this one." We await this other book with eagerness, but perhaps it will not be out of place to suggest that some of that analysis properly belongs as a foundation in this one. We might also be left at the end of the book with a detestation of the methods of imperialism rather than a feeling of helplessness for being victims of our own self-deception.

These comments are not meant to condemn what is an important book by an author who has dared to question our most accepted formulae on Africa. Not least of its merits is that it draws the moral that one of the tests of a revolution is the extent of mass involvement.

For the African liberation movements the message is unambiguous—the way the struggle for liberation is conducted and the degree of mass participation is of crucial importance in determining the nature of the outcome. The best guarantee of real and fundamental change lies in the creation in the process of struggle of such democratic political institutions as will open the springs of mass involvement. Here, at least, lies a profoundly positive message, and one which lies within our own realisation.

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Discussion Contribution on:

Robert Owen and British Socialism

Alan Rogers

The article by Ruth and Edmond Frow in the May edition of *Marxism Today* will be one of many such articles we shall have an opportunity to read in this bicentenary year of Robert Owen's birth. And many will declare, like the Frows, that "Robert Owen was not only the greatest of the early English Socialists, but he had the most influence on the development of the labour movement". The articles seen so far have this common thought running through them, whether the journals describe themselves as Marxist or not. They suggest to me that I am reading an act of hero-worship, or the-labour-movement-at-prayer.

I have an aversion, at this time of my life, to all forms of hagiolatry: I have been a member of the Labour Party for twenty six years and have lived through the Khrushchev revelations at the Twentieth Congress, the shock of Nye Bevan's speech about walking naked into the Conference Chamber, and the sadness of the truth that my father died without seeing much hope of the realisation of his socialist dreams even within the lifetime of his own children. No saviour from on high deliver, for us!

I do not intepret Robert Owen's influence in the same way as Ruth and Edmond Frow *et al.* What kind of man was Owen? Margaret Cole contributed an article on Owen to the Voices of Socialism series run by *Tribune* during 1964. She said: "He read practically nothing and listened to nobody. Though he believed quite strongly in equality and free discussion, he was no democrat; in his factory he was a benevolent autocrat, and when he became a working class leader he was still an autocrat whose orders, expressed in terms of the sweetest reason, must finally be obeyed".

Five years later she contributed another article on Owen to *Tribune's* series *The People's Past.* Here she said: "he never listened (except politely) to what anyone else had to say. Because he *knew;* and if people—workers, employers, ministers with a large M or a small one—would only listen to him they could establish the New Moral World 'like a thief in the night' ". She said, perhaps in mitigation, that the contemporaries who followed him "could see for themselves that, whatever he might have thought about formal democracy, he was in practice the most courteously egalitarian of men, whose 'fine manners' were an example to anyone and whose plain honesty and kindness could put others to shame and fill them with a desire to be as good, and selfless and as unpretentious as he was".

Is it not important to keep the fact in mind that Owen was a supremely successful business man? For me the most horrifying and revealing account of the man occurs in Edmund Wilson's *To The Finland Station.* Wilson tells us: "when he discovered that his urgings were not enough to make his employees industrious and honest, he worked out ways to check up on them and restrain them. He had hung up over his workers at their work little four-sided pieces of wood, which had a different colour on each side and a different grade of conduct assigned to each colour. He could then see on any day when he walked through, from the colour turned out by the foreman, how each employee had behaved the day before. Whenever he en-

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countered one of the colours which signified 'bad or inferior conduct' he would simply fix his eyes on the delinquent worker as he passed. These gradings were all entered in a register so that he could always find out after an absence how the worker had been behaving while he was away. And he devised an infallible method for detecting and locating thefts". (*The Fontana Library* edition, page 95).

Owen's "utopian gradualism" is motivated by a fear of the emerging socio-historical alternative. He insists that under the conditions in which they live the workers "acquire a gross ferocity of character which, if legislative measures shall not be judiciously devised to prevent its increase, and ameliorate the condition of this class, will sooner or later plunge the country into a formidable and perhaps inextricable state of danger. The direct object of these observations is to effect the amelioration and avert the danger". (Meszaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, page 299).

I believe it is possible that Owen foresaw the end of capitalism as a system unless it changed its ways. And he proceeded to show his fellow capitalists how, in his opinion, they could "avert the danger". And one of the methods was to gain control of the labour movement itself. It could be argued that this purpose is not apparent in his written works. Maybe: but we must judge men by our experience of them in action. "Believe in the works, not in the words: words are an empty shell, but the works show you the master", said Paracelsus.

We can see this at work in the history of the National Consolidated Trades Union founded in 1833. Cole and Postgate tell us in their book *The Common People* (University Paperback edition, page 268) that the two most clear-headed men in the Union were James Morrison and J. E. Smith, editor of the journal *The Crisis*. "Smith's economic analyses are astonishingly modern and intelligent; reading them torn from their context few critics would believe that they antedated Marx. They urged generally an informed and directed hostility to the employers . . . what today would be called the strategy and tactics of the class-struggle. . . . Although (Owen) had launched against the capitalist class the most formidable attack it had ever yet sustained he was wholly unwilling to countenance even verbal warfare against it: the disapproval of Owen was enough to extinguish them".

Owen was, I do not deny, a remarkable man. But he symbolises the essential weaknesses of our British labour movement. (1) "He read practically nothing". This tradition is perpetuated up to and including our own time in the broad mass of the movement. The bulk of our people see no need, for instance, for a socialist newspaper of their very own? J. P. M. Millar (Secretary, National Council of Labour Party's Trustees) wrote to the *Guardian* during 1970 and said: "the Labour Party, unlike the early British Socialist parties, acts on the mistaken principle that you can have a Socialist party without informed Socialist members".

(2) Owen practised paternalism: he *knew*.

I believe, then, that Owen's influence (along with that of the ideology of British imperialism) has helped to prevent the development of a socialist ideology among the broad mass of the British working class. And Owen contributed to that degree of philistinism which enabled John Lewis to write in the paperback *What Kind of Revolution? A Christian-Communist Dialogue*: "As the British are distinguished among the nations of modern Europe by their contempt for philosophy, this makes it a little difficult for them ever to discover what Marxism is really about".

There is a big job to be done. The cause is not helped by paternalistic and autocratic attitudes whether they emanate from Transport House or our Marxist-Leninists, both of whom I am afraid think they *know*. And the cause is not helped by forms of hero-worship. The last word should be with Brecht's Galileo, quoted by Ann Gray in her article in the April edition of *Marxism Today:*

"Andrea: Unhappy is the land that has no heroes!
Galileo: Unhappy is the land that needs a hero!"

ERRATA

We regret that for a number of reasons there were some printing errors in the article by Martin Jacques which appeared in our October number, entitled "Notes on Intellectuals".

The most important of these were:

Page 308: Left hand column, first para. line 11. Replace first word "then" by "these".

Same page: Right hand column, first para. line 9. Replace "term" by "time".

Page 309: First para., line 16. Replace "within" by "unlike".

Page 315: Right hand column, first para., line 4. Insert full stop after "characteristic" and make "But" the beginning of the new sentence.

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